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# **The Relationship between Internal and External Conversation**

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Sociology

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*This Thesis is Dedicated to Alexandros: My Longest Journey.*

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**Declaration**

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another University.

Athanasia Chalari

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Abstract:

This study offers a definition, description, analytical theorisation and critical discussion concerning the relationship between internal and external conversation. 'Internal conversation' refers to the inner dialogues that individuals have with themselves about themselves and the social environment, while 'external conversation' refers to those parts of internal conversation that the individual shares with others. The central question of this research, concerning the relationship between internal and external conversation, derives from a common observation which remains unanswered: why do people produce different external conversations or different actions or responses when they face similar social situations? In other words, why do people react in different ways to analogous stimuli or circumstances? The individual constantly interacts in a specific way with both her external environment and herself; this process links the inner and outer cosmos of each person. This relationship is formed according to specific phases and operations, and it constitutes an 'agential filter' comprised of certain stages that enable the individual to relate her internal and external conversations. The individual uses a specific process in order to decide which part of her internal conversation she will externalise. This process is defined as 'mediation' and operates differently for each individual. It does, however, have a common aim: the main objective of mediation is to achieve a subjectively-defined degree of 'inner balance' between her inner and external world which is satisfactory to her.



## INTRODUCTION.

My objective in this study is to explore a new area on the sociological map, namely the relationship between internal and external conversation. As a recently established sociological term, 'internal conversation' refers to the inner dialogues that individuals have with themselves and about themselves and the social environment, while 'external conversation' refers to those parts of internal conversation that the individual shares with others. The central question of this research, concerning the relationship between internal and external conversation, derives from a common observation which poses an unanswered question: namely why do people produce different external conversations or different actions or different responses when they face similar social situations? In other words, why do people react in different ways to analogous stimuli or circumstances?

The relationship between internal and external conversation constitutes a sociological problem which raises both theoretical considerations and also practical and pragmatic issues; thus I will make a systematic attempt to reveal its nature and define its components. My study is an attempt to understand the process that relates two vivid parts of the individual's everyday life: the dialogues she has with herself and the dialogues she has with others. Both these kinds of conversation are conducted by all normal people in different ways and, to a certain extent, both aspects of conversation have already been researched. However, the way that they are related remains relatively unexplored from the point of view of sociology. In the present work, I propose that there is a specific process that takes place between internal and external conversation which consists of various stages and is responsible for what the

individual says and what she keeps unspoken; this process I call 'mediation'. I shall demonstrate that *mediation is the deliberative process that enables the individual to achieve a subjectively-defined degree of 'inner balance' between her inner and external world which is satisfactory to her.*

### Internal and External Conversation

One intriguing aspect in studying society and the interactions between people is that their ensuing actions cannot be foreseen and, to outside observer, are basically unpredictable. Much of social theory approaches the individual subject through society and understands the person as a purely social component, as a part of a wider organised system called society. By contrast, my study is predicated upon each person's possessions and exercise of agential powers and properties; that is, the existence of personal emergent properties (of mind), enabling their use of powers to act back with causal efficacy upon the social.

'Internal conversation' is a term introduced by Margaret Archer (2000, 2003, 2007) and constitutes an agential property used uniquely by each subject in order to evaluate the social as well as the inner world. The person is thus understood as an active agent, able to process an external or inner stimulus, analyse it by specific methods ('mediation mechanism') and then, if appropriate, to externalise a response to it. The individual critically chooses which parts of her internal conversations she will share with others, and when she will do it, in what way, for what reason, etc. This suggests that, for any particular individual to produce contributions to external conversation, she first produces internal conversations, since external dialogues originate from

internal conversation. Internal and external conversations are interrelated and interconnected in the sense that an individual cannot produce an external conversation without first deliberating upon it, which is indeed what Vygotsky ([1934]1962) sees as the main function of ‘inner speech’.

In this study, I propose that the individual operates according to a system of social and private priorities, that is, social expectations and personal concerns; these she re-forms and transforms or shapes and defines at any given time. Through her inner freedom, her ability to be reflexive, and through the dialogical relationship that she has with herself and society, the individual controls the ways in which she externalises herself and to some degree, the manner in which she makes her way through life. This means that the individual has ceased, at least partially, to be merely passively receptive to social circumstances, someone ‘to whom things happen’. The impact of the social environment is undeniable, but not necessarily and exclusively decisive. The role of inner freedom and the individual’s ability to be reflexive in relation to herself and her social circumstances is, *inter alia*, what makes each person different.

A vital aspect of internal conversation and, especially, personal concerns is the importance of what we care about. Whatever we see, hear, feel – generally, whatever we receive from our social environment – is ‘filtered’ according to what is important to us. In parallel, our internal conversations are produced according to what we care about. Frankfurt (1988) identifies a connection between what a person cares about and what she will think about, and, after deliberation, what she will decide is best for her to do. Frankfurt explains that ‘a person who cares about something is, as it were,



invested in it. He identifies himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whether whatever he cares about is diminished or enhanced' (Frankfurt, 1988: 83).

The more important something is for a person, the more central role it has in her life.

The ways people react, therefore, or the external conversation that they produce, are connected both with what they care about and their individual ability to deliberate upon this 'something' critically and to select it consciously as something that is of concern to them. For example, a wedding ring as a symbol of marriage as a price concern may be accorded a value totally disproportionate to its cost. I will suggest that, in fact, there is not one 'something' that an individual cares about, but a combination of social expectations and personal concerns. What is important to each individual is not necessarily constant or universal; it can alter significantly over time according to specific external and inner circumstances. People who live in authoritarian regimes, for example, may react or even resist in different ways. For some, the most important thing might be their family's safety and for that reason they will do whatever they can to protect it. This might mean that they do not actively express resistance to the unwanted regime, but instead will ensure that their children learn correctly how to evaluate the social environment in which they grow up. For others in this situation, the most important value might be that of freedom and thus they will do anything to protect it. These people might leave their country or actively fight the authoritarian regime even if this endangers their family. In either case, the important point is that the individual has the ability to reflect upon her actions, reactions and external conversations, and be or become critical about them (Archer, 2003, 2007).

External conversation is related to inner life and derives from the internal conversation of the individual. It cannot be understood as a mere reflex response or an automatic reaction to any kind of interaction with others. Since not all individuals externalise their internal conversations, or react in the same way for the same reason and under the same circumstances, there are persuasive grounds for positing that external conversation derives, at least in part, from agential properties and not necessarily and exclusively from social situations and conditions.

The present work will involve a critical negotiation of various sociological paths, but it has a single purpose: to explain how internal and external conversation are related. The analysis will be presented in two parts: firstly I will introduce the sociological theories underlying this research in part one, and, secondly, I will address the concept of mediation in part two.

### Internal Conversation

In the present work, internal conversation refers to the dialogue the individual has with herself in relation to herself and the social environment. In everyday life this dialogue can be about literally anything and may, and often does, incorporate thoughts, dreams, feelings, icons, memories, and any other kind of experience that the individual can use in order to deliberate about herself and society. Equally important, internal conversation relates to those inner dialogical experiences that the individual may prefer to keep unspoken. Thus, when we refer to ‘internal conversation’, we refer to personal properties which are known and are experienced only by the individual

who produces them: they are first person in kind. Other people within the social environment are not necessarily, or usually, aware of them – at least in full.

Often, when we use the term ‘internal conversation’, we are referring to the dialogical properties of inner life. The notion is as old as Plato<sup>1</sup> but the term has recently been coined by social theorists and assigned a precise and specific definition. The term was introduced by the social theorist Margaret Archer (2000, 2003, 2007), who uses it to refer to the mental activity all normal people experience: she describes internal conversation as the talk ‘all normal people have with themselves, within their own heads, usually silently and usually from an early age’ (Archer, 2007: 2). For Archer, internal conversation is ‘the personal power that enables us to be the authors of our own projects in society’ (Archer, 2003: 34) and she maintains that it is ‘a personal emergent property rather than a psychological faculty of people’ (Archer, 2003: 94).

Archer views internal conversation as the mode through which human beings practise ‘reflexivity’, which she defines as ‘the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and *vice versa*’ (Archer, 2007: 4). For Archer, then, reflexivity itself is the dialogical deliberation that takes place through internal conversation, which is thus reflexivity’s modality. Therefore, reflexivity, as the subjective interaction between the person and her social environment, takes place through the medium of internal conversation. Archer (2003) suggests that reflexive deliberations are comprised of three properties: 1) genuinely interiority, 2) ontologically subjectivity, and 3) causally efficacy; and she states that ‘only if the ‘internal conversation’ can be upheld as an irreducible

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<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus*, ed. Bernard Williams, Cambridge and Indianapolis, Hackett, 1992, 189e.



personal property which is real and causally influential, can the exercise of its powers be considered as the missing mediatory mechanism that is needed to complete an adequate account of social conditioning' (Archer, 2003: 16).

In 2006, whilst developing his own insights into the 'semiotic self', Norbert Wiley attempted to examine the nature of 'inner speech', the term he uses to refer to internal conversation, and he concludes that inner speech is intra-subjective and dialogical: it involves two speakers, but not two persons; these two speakers are aspects of one and the same person. Wiley underlines the fact that inner speech uses language, but is also private. This is because 'non-linguistic imagery may also substitute for parts of a (inner) sentence' (Wiley, 2006: 321). Following C. S. Peirce, Wiley states that inner dialogue can be expressed through emotions, sensations, non-linguistic thoughts, speech qualities or even visceral sensations. It is important to note that, according to Wiley, internal conversation can be fully understood only by the person within whom it is happening, although that person is capable of giving an account of it to another individual, that is, to an interlocutor. In turn, the interlocutor also chooses which part of each of her own internal conversations she wishes to share with others and which part to keep private.

Although internal conversation can and does have linguistic characteristics which would be understood by many people, it can also consist of symbols and images which may have meaning for the subject alone; an example might be an individual visualising the expression on the face of a long dead friend. In this case, the content of internal conversation can only be understood directly by the individual who produces it and it is that individual who gives 'permission' to herself about what will be

externalised. As Wiley puts it: ‘we are little gods in the world of inner speech. We are the only ones, we run the show, we are the boss’ (Wiley, 2006: 329). He further argues that internal conversation is partly public or publishable, and partly private, that it is, therefore, a ‘semi-private’ language<sup>2</sup>. Wiley clearly states that we can act because we can think in this way; and the most important thoughts, as the pragmatists (see below) suggested, take the form of internal conversation.

### Where do these theories derive from?

The notion of the dialogical interaction the individual undertakes with herself began with Plato and was taken up by Georg Simmel and subsequently by the school of thought known as American Pragmatism. Although classical social theory was not particularly involved with singular persons and their agential properties, Simmel was one of the few sociologists who paid attention to the individual’s ‘inner life’. Erving Goffman also attempted investigations at the micro-level of personal performativity, but, as I will demonstrate, he examined such individuals only through the framework of society.

Simmel was one of the first sociologists to analyse the nature and importance of inner freedom, and he clearly distinguished the inner from the outer world of the individual. He argues that the individual has a core of internal resources, such as personal experiences, knowledge, and perception of the world, and that, although every individual has internal beliefs, thoughts and principles, she adjusts or even sacrifices these in order to conform to the social/external environment. For Simmel, this

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, Wiley argues, *contra* Wittgenstein, that internal conversation (or inner speech) does represent a ‘private language’.

adjustment/sacrifice depends entirely upon the individual's will, which is a completely personal and private attribute. Thus the degree to which a person will follow social forms depends upon herself and her inner resources. Simmel introduces the twofold nature of the individual which derives from the importance of her inner existence and her external environment. Society 'expects' each individual to find a way to co-exist with others in a 'meaningful' manner; Simmel suggests that the most significant part of society is the individual, who has, concurrently, the ability to maintain a degree of inner freedom (Spykman, 1964).

The contribution to the present study of American Pragmatism, specifically through the work of John Dewey, William James, Charles Sanders Peirce and George Herbert Mead, is central, since it explains how the 'self' has been sociologically conceptualised in terms of the dialogic relationship with itself. Paradoxically, none of the four founding fathers of American Pragmatism would consider himself a sociologist.

According to American Pragmatism, the individual's knowledge is not like a mental copy of things that exist in reality, but is, rather, an attempt to understand the social world in order to make practical sense of it and to act effectively. In short, the pragmatistic theory of truth consists simply of those ideas that happen to work. Knowledge is true if it helps us to achieve our practical aims and objectives. Mead converted the earlier pragmatists' ideas into a sociological theory of action. He believed that (ontologically) the world is never experienced directly, but always through the ideas that we hold about it epistemologically. The meaning of reality is, in a fundamental sense, the meaning that we (as a community) choose to give to it; in



other words, the actions of individuals depend on how they define a situation, rather than on the ontology of the situation itself. An effective definition is simply one that works when people come to act on their definitions (Fulcher & Scott, 2003).

All four theorists attempted to address the means by which individuals interact with themselves in different ways and through their work, although none of them supplied a complete assessment of how the self interacts with itself, the concept of internal conversation was founded. The clearest generic explanation of the contribution of American Pragmatism was offered by Wiley (1994) who defined how, according to pragmatism, the self interacts with herself. Wiley explains that two conversational poles were proposed by Mead (I and Me) and by Peirce (I and You), each thus incorporating one pole overlooked by the other. By combining the two theories, Wiley developed the triad I-You-Me or, as he calls them semiotically, I-present-sign, You-future-interpretant, Me-past-object. As Wiley suggests, this combination includes both Mead's and Peirce's elements and the relations between them. Human existence thus consists of the elements of present, future, past (that is sign), interpretant, object (the triad I-You-Me), all of which overlap, displaying connectedness and are capable of achieving solidarity (Wiley, 1994). As can be seen, the basis of the definition of internal conversation or 'inner speech' (the term Wiley used) derives from the capacity the individual has to interact dialogically with herself, as initially introduced by American Pragmatism.

However, supplementary psychological (*inter alia*) theories concerning inner life contribute significantly to the understanding of the origins of internal and external conversation. The term 'internal conversation' derives from earlier attempts to

describe such inner interaction, in which a variety of terms were adopted, such as 'inner speech' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962), 'egocentric speech' (Piaget, 1926), 'musement' (Peirce, 1934), 'self-talk' (Goffman, 1981), 'intrapersonal communication' (Vocate, 1994). Piaget and Vygotsky, as developmental psychologists, were primarily interested in the origins and processes of cognitive development, but disagreed about the role that private speech played in cognitive development. Vygotsky called it 'inner speech' while Piaget referred to it as 'egocentric speech'. According to Piaget (1926), egocentric speech is the speech a child produces without being interested in whether or not she will be understood by others: the child speaks aloud to herself without attempting to communicate with other people. Piaget believed that this kind of talk disappears as the self-awareness of the child develops.

On the other hand, Vygotsky ([1934]1962) did not believe egocentric speech to be an anti-social kind of talk, but a preliminary vocal attempt to converse with oneself. Vygotsky believed that this kind of self-talk would eventually be internalised and claimed that inner speech turns into inward thought (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 143). He views inner speech as originating from the internalisation of the external world, or in other words its public dialogue. Vygotsky clearly states that inner speech has a separate function from external speech and that inner speech constitutes the internalisation of the external environment, and consequently the individual's external interactions with others. This internalisation involves critical evaluation of and rumination on the individual's relationship with herself and others before giving rise to external speech.



In 1994, Vocate built upon the notion of externalisation of internal conversation. Her description of 'intrapersonal communication' partly comprises what Piaget called 'egocentric speech', what Mead suggested was talking to the 'generalised other' and what Vygotsky proposed as 'inner speech', placing additional stress on the externalisation of internal conversation. 'Intrapersonal communication' represents an attempt to combine the existing theories about inner conversation: Vocate argued that the term 'inner speech' refers to a process of encoding thought into language or decoding linguistic communication into meaning.

Sociological researchers have recently begun analytical investigation into interaction through conversation, resulting in the method of Conversation Analysis. Since my project explores the nature of conversation in terms of being internal and external, Conversation Analysis appears the most promising sociological tool to aid me in examining from where external conversation is derived. This sociological method studies external conversation in terms of 'conversational actions' in order to decode the forms of action that interlocutors use as they talk. This method provides a number of sociological tools that will enable me to compare, in dialogical and linguistic terms, internal and external conversation, and thus to determine whether or to what extent these two different forms of conversation share common ground.

As I have stated, internal conversation is a sociological term recently introduced which describes the ability each individual has to interact dialogically with herself. In order to produce this kind of internal interaction, the individual internalises the external from the range of potential inputs emanating from society and reflects upon them. This means that she selectively, critically, dialogically and internally processes

what she has internalised. The outcome of this process (if there is a specific outcome) might become externalised or may remain private to the individual.

### Opposing views.

So far, I have discussed the origins of the theory of internal conversation and, in effect, what theories and views form the foundation of my work. However, a number of social theorists oppose the accordance to such agential powers to particular person and thus the importance of internal conversation. Among many others, two of the best known sociologists today, Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, reject the idea of significant inner freedom, and instead believe that the individual is so closely related to and dependent upon society that it becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible, to separate the individual from society and *vice versa*.

Bourdieu sees 'practice' as the outcome of the dialectic relationship between structure and agency and believes that practices are neither objectively determined nor the product of free will (Bourdieu, 1977). His attempt to bridge objectivism and subjectivism depends upon his concept of 'habitus', which he defines as a mental or cognitive disposition through which people deal with the social world. Individuals incorporate internalised schemes by which they understand, perceive, evaluate and appreciate the 'fields' comprising the social domain. It is through such schemes that people produce practices by which they also perceive and evaluate themselves. Bourdieu describes habitus as 'the dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality' (Bourdieu, 1977: 72) and as 'the product of the internalisation of the structures' (Bourdieu, 1989: 18). Each 'habitus' reflects



objective aspects of social structure, such as age group, gender and class: not everyone has the same habitus, but those who occupy the same position within the social world tend to have a similar habitus (Bourdieu, 1990).

Bourdieu explains that habitus merely ‘suggests’ what people should think and what they should choose to do, but he adds that ‘people are not fools’ (Bourdieu, [1980]1990). While people are not entirely rational, they act in a ‘reasonable’ manner and they have practical sense. Bourdieu believes that there is logic to what people do; it is the ‘logic of practice’ which is performative rather than declarative (Bourdieu, [1980]1990). Habitus thus functions ‘below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny and control by the will’ (Bourdieu, 1984a: 466). It can be seen that Bourdieu does not endorse the inner freedom of the individual; at the same time, however, he does not explain what role the individual’s subjectivity plays in the ‘shaping’, modification or transformation (if any) of habitus.

Like Bourdieu, Giddens attempts to discover how structure is related to action. He views structure as the mediation between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual and conceptualises the individual largely through action alone. Thus Giddens does not allow the individual any significant degree of freedom or autonomy despite frequent reiteration of the human capacity to have acted differently. The conceptual core of Giddens’ Structuration Theory lies in the concepts of structure, system and duality of structure. Giddens defines structure as ‘the structuring properties (rules and resources), the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them systemic form’ (Giddens, 1984: 17); elsewhere he notes that ‘structure exists in

and through the activities of human agents' (Giddens, 1979: 256). Giddens' theory can also be seen as having certain similarities to Goffman's concept of the individual. Goffman believed that each individual performs specific 'social roles' but the 'attachment' to these roles and the actions related to relevant roles may vary. However, like Bourdieu and Giddens, does not explain where these actions and roles originate nor whether there is a degree of freedom concerning the 'performance' of or 'attachment' to a role. What all these share in common is a 'thin' representation of the social subject in her concrete singularity.

### The objectives of this thesis.

Having presented the main routes that this study will follow in order to approach the nature of the mediation, I must note that there are certain approaches that have helped me in profound and distinct ways to uncover the nature of the process that mediates between internal and external conversation. It would be inaccurate to suggest that the self is completely separate from and untouched by the social world, but few sociologists have recognised what Wiley and Archer describe as the 'private' part of the self (James, Peirce and Simmel came close to this view, but not close enough.) A new debate has begun about the self which is now approached from a sociological perspective without being seen as purely a social product. It is now suggested that the self consists of private and social elements, enjoys at least some internal freedom and formulates personal unexpressed thoughts.

Archer's understanding of the significance of internal conversation has thus taken a sociological turn. Archer clearly distinguishes the private from the social aspect of the



individual, and she brought to the debate the importance of internal conversation and reflexivity. In 1995 she explained that the individual experiences feelings of inner freedom as well as social constraints (and enablements), but that there is a distinction between the two: ‘An inescapable part of our inescapably social condition is to be aware of its constraints [...]. Equally, we acknowledge certain social blessings [...]. At the same time, an inalienable part of our human condition is the feeling of freedom [...]. This ambivalence is a real and defining feature of a human being who is also a social being. We *are* simultaneously free and constrained and we *also* have some awareness of it. The former derives from the nature of social reality; the latter from human nature’s reflexivity. Together they generate an authentic (if imperfect) reflection upon human condition in society’ (Archer, 1995: 1-2). For Archer, then, the individual is not a passive receiver of structure, action, roles and forms. Instead, each individual has at least some ability to deliberate critically upon society and upon herself. For Archer, ‘dialogical reflexivity integrates ourselves around what we care about most. Simultaneously it monitors our participation in society, since our voluntaristic social activities are sieved through our internal commitments and our involuntary ones are scrutinised in the same manner’ (Archer, 2003: 32-33). Following Archer and Wiley, I uphold the view that, before the individual externalises any aspect of her private life, she generally deliberates upon it. The individual person has the capacity and ability (as part of her personal powers) to respond critically to any social occurrence, and consequently to accept, adapt, deny, reproduce or merely forget it, although there are usually social bonuses or penalties associated with these different responses, depending upon social (and, specifically, situational) positioning. I suggest that the way that these processes take place is through ‘mediation’.

The process of Mediation.

As previously stated, every subject has the ability to produce internal as well as external conversations. Sociological research has contributed significantly to the understanding of the phenomenon of external conversation. Although the term 'external conversation' has not been used, conversation as forms of interaction between the individuals has been extensively explored. In addition to sociologists' interest in directly studying conversation as a form of interaction, other forms of interaction have been examined, and current social theory can offer valuable insights into the ways individuals interact both with each other and with society. Sociology has always been interested in the ways, means and reasons that society influences, conditions, controls, manipulates or even directs the individual.

External conversation *per se* has been extensively explored in the past, and 'internal conversation', as a sociologically defined term, has more recently begun to attract the interest of researchers. However, what remains unclear, and what sociological research to date provides no specific basis for understanding, is the nature of the relationship between internal and external conversation, and thus there are unresolved questions concerning their relationship. In this work, I will follow the view which rejects the notions that the individual is purely and solely a social construction. The distinction between internal and external conversation describes the fact that the individual and society constitute two different aspects of reality, which, at the same time, are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, the one basic question that I seek to answer is: what is the dialogic relationship between the inner and the outer world of the individual?

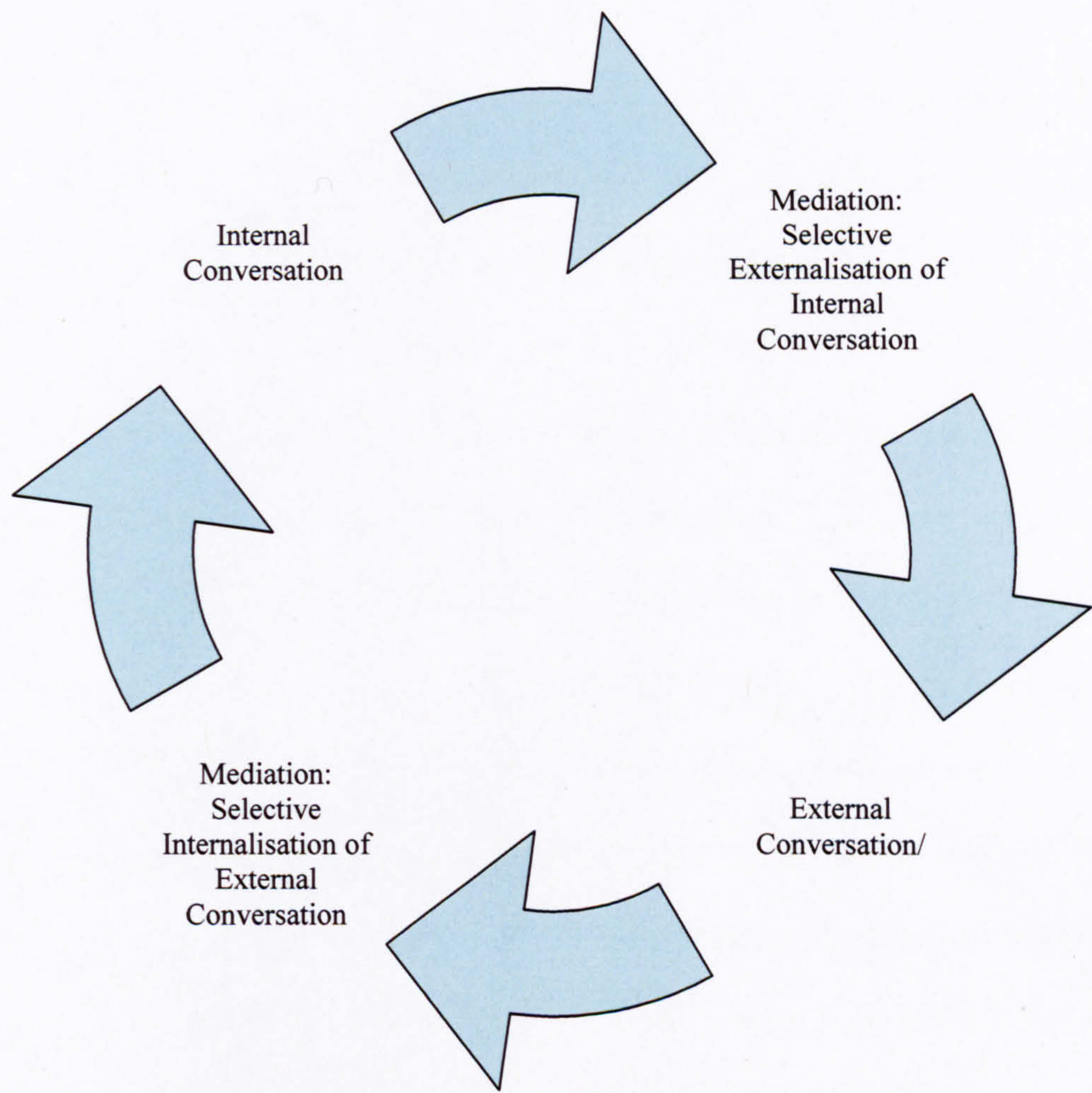


As explained above, I will begin my exploration of the relationship between the individual and the society within the framework of social theory and the work of specific sociologists, some of whom suggest further questions. How does external conversation become internal, and *vice versa*? What differentiates individuals' actions? Why do all individuals not respond in the same way in analogous social circumstances? Why do people follow different norms or forms or structures? What is it that makes them decide different things? These are questions that must be addressed in investigating internal conversation (as a part of the individual's inner life) in relation to external conversation (as part of the individual's social environment). At the same time, more practical and technical questions occur. What does internal conversation consist of? Does it entail only language? If so, does it involve only one language? In what form does mediation occur? Is it an abstract notion, merely a concept that I have created? Does it have separate components? How does it work? Are people aware of it? Can they control it? All these have relevance, but the ultimate and most important question is: is mediation a social or an agential process or something of both?

I shall attempt to answer these latter questions in this study. One thing that I must clarify first is that I perceive mediation as forming the way the individual interacts with herself and with the social environment; thus understood, mediation is a part of an ongoing circle which describes how conversation is shaped between internal and



external conversation. Mediation will thus be seen as the externalisation of internal conversation and as the internalisation of external conversation. The following diagram shows the form of this circle:



The ongoing circle represented here can stop at any given moment or repeat itself indefinitely: mediation is an ongoing endless process which involves different internal and external conversations.

This study is divided into two parts. The first part will examine the theoretical background, selecting and justifying terminology and concepts for use in my own analysis. The second part will draw together and explain the terms selected in the earlier section which are relevant to mediation. I will present a diagrammatical representation of the form and stages of mediation. Then the ‘mediation dichotomy’



will be examined in order to analyse the two main aspects of mediation separately, namely social expectations and personal concerns. These two aspects can be related in three main ways: they can be in conflict, in balance or their relationship may be one of indifference; the main objective of the mediation process is to achieve a satisfactory degree of inner balance between these two elements, that is, personal concerns and social expectations. Finally, the last section will explore ‘mediation synthesis’, presenting the mechanism of mediation as a whole.

This study can be summarised as follows. The term ‘mediation’ is used to define the relationship between internal and external conversation. Mediation constitutes an ‘agential filter’, consisting of certain stages that enable the individual to relate her internal and external conversations. More specifically, mediation is the deliberative process that enables the individual to achieve a subjectively-defined degree of ‘inner balance’ between her inner and external world, which is satisfactory to her. Mediation is based on the notions of internal conversation and reflexive deliberations, but it is not synonymous with reflexivity, which, according to Archer, is ‘the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa (Archer, 2007: 4). *Mediation is the process that enables the individual to be reflexive within society*, the process through which such reflexivity is achieved, formed, understood and practiced.

### ‘Ithaca’.

Individuals produce internal conversations in order to deliberate reflexively upon themselves and society *inter alia*; it has also been suggested that external conversation

is the outcome of this process. Individuals externalise their internal conversations in different ways, although their reasons for doing so might be similar. This means that each individual evaluates external situations in different ways and responds accordingly. External conversation derives from internal conversation and is connected with internal conversation in a particular way which may differ dramatically between different individuals.

My work is based on Archer's theory of reflexivity and will use the crucial terms of internal and external conversation in order to discover the dialogic relationship that is formed between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual. Each day, everyone has to make a journey as she makes her way through life. Every individual tries to find the best way to externalise what she internally considers appropriate. However, there is no standardized method that all people use in order to interact with themselves and others. Some people might maintain a stable and satisfactory relationship with themselves and others, whereas for other people it may be extremely difficult to find peace of mind. There is, of course, no such thing as 'permanent happiness', but the common denominator is that all people try to achieve dialogically a subjectively defined degree of (most of the time ephemeral) balance between their inner concerns and their outer social environment. Here I suggest that 'mediation' is the process that provides individuals with the means for the 'journey' in order to achieve their 'ephemeral balance', their 'Ithaca'.

Since 'inner balance' can only be ephemeral and mediation is endless, however, it would be wise to remember what the famous Greek poet Kavafis once wrote:

Σα βγεις στον πηγαιμό για την Ιθάκη,  
να εύχεται νά 'ναι μακρύς ο δρόμος,  
γεμάτος περιπέτειες, γεμάτος γνώσεις.

(As you set out for Ithaca  
hope your road is a long one,  
full of adventure, full of discovery.)

K. Kavafis, 'Ithaca' (my trans.)



## CHAPTER 1

### Georg Simmel and Ervin Goffman on Internal and External Conversation.

#### 1: Prolegomena.

In this thesis, I attempt to identify the nature of the relationship between internal and external conversation and, specifically, the process mediating between these two forms of dialogue. Mediation constitutes a complex mechanism according to which the individual interacts with society and with herself. In this first chapter I will discuss Simmel's and Goffman's views on society and the individual, in order to determine how they might be used to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between internal and external conversation. First, I shall analyse Simmel's distinction between the private and the social, and his views on differentiation and freedom with regard to the individual, then discuss inner needs and social forms. Following this, I will explore Goffman's views on society and the self and introduce his role concepts. Finally, I will explore 'self-talk' as a distinctive form of internalisation and externalisation.

#### 1.1: Simmel and Goffman.

The present thesis will investigate the relationship between internal and external conversation which can be seen as an aspect of the debate on structure and agency, but focused on the dialogical level of this relationship. Although recent sociology has been involved with this question (to a limited extent) classic social theory should also be investigated, for its possible contribution to understanding the relationship between

internal and external conversation. The work of Georg Simmel and Ervin Goffman will begin the theoretical exploration of the origins of the relationship between internal and external conversation.

Simmel believed that society was a relational concept: it was constituted by endless relations and interactions between individuals. Accordingly, 'society' is the name given to this synthesis of continuing interactions. My research attempts to investigate the relationship between internal and external conversation or, in a wider context, the dialogic relationship between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual. Simmel's way of approaching the private and social parts of the individual's reality offers ways of understanding how the abovementioned relationship is structured.

In a similar manner to Simmel, Ervin Goffman places the individual and the way the individual relates to society at the centre of his investigation. Goffman's work is based on the analysis of the 'interaction order', the part of social life that occurs when at least two individuals interact. Goffman's purpose was to discover the structures and forms exhibited in face-to-face interaction, as well as to investigate the sources of its orderliness. He wanted to demonstrate the significance of matters which had formerly been regarded as being of little consequence, namely to analyse what people do when they are in the company of others (Williams, 1998).



## 1.2: The Simmelian contribution.

### 1.2.1: Social & Private.

Simmel's main contribution to understanding the relationship between internal and external conversation is made plain by this quotation:

The individual who lives from his inner resources, who can answer for his actions only if they are directed by his own conviction, is supposed to orient his will toward the purpose of others. As something ethical, this remains always a matter of his own will; it flows from the innermost core of his personality. But what is more, he is also supposed to become, in his self-based existence, a member of a collective which has its centre outside of him [...] Man internally stands under two mutually alien norms [...] our movement revolving around our own centre (something totally different from egoism) claims to be as definitive as the movement around the social centre; in fact it claims to be the decisive meaning of life (Simmel, 1950: 248).

Here, Simmel begins from a central realisation: the individual who has a core of internal resources (for example, personal experiences, knowledge, and perception of the world) is supposed to adjust to the social environment. Simmel states that, although every individual has internal beliefs thoughts, principles or even conversations, she is supposed to adjust or even sacrifice these in order to conform to the social/external environment and structure. Simmel maintains that this adjustment/sacrifice depends completely on the individual's will<sup>1</sup>, which is a completely personal and private orientation. Thus the degree to which the individual will follow social forms depends upon the individual and her inner resources. Society, 'expects' each individual to find a way to co-exist with others in a 'meaningful' manner. At the same time, the individual needs to be a member of a social circle (or of many social circles) that has different roots and trajectories. Therefore Simmel introduces the twofold nature of the individual which derives jointly from the

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<sup>1</sup> It should be mentioned that Simmel refers to 'something ethical' when he says that the orientation the individual chooses to take is completely personal. For further discussion see Simmel (1950: 248-50).

importance of her inner existence and her external environment. Simmel suggests that the individual is the most significant part of society and has, at the same time, the ability to maintain a degree of inner freedom.

According to Simmel society in the wider sense 'consists of both form and content' (Spykman, 1965: 38). The differentiation between the content and the form of social phenomena and the synthesis of the latter into a field of special scientific inquiry is legitimate if similar forms of socialisation occur with quite dissimilar content, and if similar social interests can be found in quite dissimilar forms of socialisation<sup>2</sup>.

As Simmel observes, there would never be any utterance without concrete motives, thus we should investigate the minor, ephemeral socialisations, which do not take on an objective form in permanent social structures. He suggests that sociology should also study minor interactions which build and support the larger objectified structures. These primary processes, which seek to build society out of immediate individual elements, must be investigated in a manner similar to those in which we investigate more complex processes and their forms (Spykman, 1965). Thus Simmel considers it important to study society as a synthesis of macro-phenomena, whilst recognising at the same time that society consists of everyday interactions which need to be understood. According to Spykman, the task of sociology, for Simmel, is to study the pure forms of socialisation, insofar as they are abstracted from material content, to give their psychological explanation and to trace their historical development.

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<sup>2</sup> When Simmel uses the term 'Socialisation', he refers to the individual's ability to interact with others generally, rather than the American connotation of the term, which refers to the period of adolescence during which the family and peer groups are involved in the individual's development.



Socialisation is a continuous process that all individuals undergo in everyday life during their interaction with other individuals. This kind of interaction is accomplished through conversation for example or, as I call it in this study, through external conversation. The consciousness of socialisation, as Simmel notes, has to do with the awareness of countless relationships, and the feeling and knowledge of influencing and being influenced by others. Any form of socialisation depends on conditions that must be fulfilled to enable processes in the individual's consciousness also to be processes of socialisation.

According to Simmel, an individual's life is never entirely social. On the one hand, the individual's existence may be viewed as a social existence and, on the other hand, as a private existence. The social structure is composed of beings which are at the same time inside and outside of it (Spykman, 1965: 35-37). Simmel suggests that there is a clear distinction between the social life of an individual and the individual's inner existence:

The standpoint from which the individual may be understood may be taken either within or outside the individual. The totality of his life may be regarded either as the centripetal destiny of its bearer or as the product and element of the social life. Therefore the fact of Socialization brings the individual into a double situation. He is included in it and is at the same time in antithesis to it. He is a member of its organism and at the same time a closed organic whole (Spykman, 1965: 84).

To repeat, Simmel views the individual as a twofold entity, as a member or element of society and as a private and personal being. This distinction is crucial, since his understanding of society is based upon it. Society is structured and viewed as the endless combinations of individuals' interactions with each other, but it can also be understood as the endless combinations of individuals' interaction with themselves. According to Simmel, the individual can be understood both as an independent entity



and as a member of a wider entity. It could thus be argued that society can be perceived both through the way its elements are formed and through the way its elements form society. This approach offers a foundation for understanding how the relationship between internal and external conversation is structured. In the same way that the individual can be approached in two ways and that society can be understood through two perspectives, the relationship between internal and external conversation can also be seen as having a twofold nature:

‘Within’ and ‘without’ are not two determinations which exist alongside of each other, but they signify the whole unitary position of the social being. His existence is therefore not merely in subdivision of its content partially social and partially individual. It stands under the fundamental, formative, irreducible category of a unity, which cannot be expressed otherwise than through the synthesis of these two logically antithetical determinations. Society consists not only of individuals who are in part not socialised, but also of individuals who are conscious of leading a completely social existence on the one hand and at the same time a completely individual existence on the other hand. The social being is the synthetic category of the two, just as the concept of causation is an aprioristic unity which includes the two elements of cause and effect (Spykman, 1965: 84).

Simmel’s understanding of the individual as a private and social being directly relates to the core of my study’s central question (what is the relationship between internal and external conversation?). Simmel offers an answer which might guide this research to a deeper understanding of the nature of this relationship: the inner part of the individual and the external part of the individual are not separate and distinct parts of reality that can be studied and perceived independently. To use Simmel’s words as translated by Spykman, the ‘relationship between them is a synthesis of the antithetical components they consist of’ (Spykman, 1965: 39). It should be noted that Simmel did not discuss the use of the term ‘synthesis’ further. In practical terms, synthesis can be understood as the ‘resultant’ of all internal and external elements with which the individual interacts, but such a definition would be inaccurate, since a synthesis cannot be merely a sum. Instead, a more comprehensive interpretation could

be applied to Simmel's reference to 'synthesis' in order to encompass the individual's ability to cope with all the antithetical elements which constitute her inner and external life. This process is what I define as mediation, and one aspect of this process derives from Simmel's idea of 'synthesis'.

As the final chapters of this study will emphasize, each individual interacts with the external and the internal worlds constantly, and often these two worlds can be in conflict. For example, let us imagine a young woman who is invited to a party. She wishes to buy the latest item in a designer's shoe collection, but she cannot afford it. This pair of shoes is very important to her because all her friends will be at the party, wearing new fashionable outfits. Thus, despite wanting to go to the party very much, she decides against it, because she cannot afford to buy the pair of shoes she wants. This example shows an individual experiencing conflict between how she perceives what members of her external environment expect her to do, and what she believes she can do. The decision the woman takes is not a *synthesis* of the antithetical elements she has to process (an invitation to a party she wants to attend, her desire to buy a specific pair of shoes to wear to the party, and her inability to afford them), but the outcome of a *compromise*. She chooses not to attend the party rather than go in the wrong outfit. The antithetical elements she has to process bring her to the decision to sacrifice one thing in order to keep something else which she considers more important (that is, her friends' good opinions of her sense of fashion).

While Simmel does not offer a discussion of the meaning of his use of the term 'synthesis', I propose that one of mediation's functions and components, namely compromise, can usefully be substituted for Simmel's imprecise notion of synthesis.



This interpretation of the relationship between internal and external conversation (mediation mechanism) as a unity that consists of the synthesis (in terms of compromise) of its antithetical elements will be used in this thesis. I will not attempt an analysis here, but I offer it as constituting a basis for indicating how mediation operates. Internal and external reality consist of many elements, some of which may be antithetical or contradictory. Mediation may thus be understood (as I will discuss in Chapters 6 and 7) as the attempt to synthesise those antithetical elements in terms of compromise and prioritisation. However, as I will explain later, mediation does not consist exclusively of antithetical elements and in many cases internal and external conversation share common and consistent elements. Finally, it should be noted that each individual perceives reality in a distinctive way and therefore this attempt of synthesis/compromise is unique for each person, just like mediation itself.

### 1.2.2: Differentiation and Freedom.

As Simmel perceives it, modern social structure, with its countless groupings and organisations, shares both a collectivistic and individualistic ideal. On the one hand, the individual has the chance to find a social circle which offers the advantages of belonging to a group. On the other hand, the individual has the chance to express her individuality in a specific combination of circles and groupings. It is the combination of individuals that creates the association, but the combination of associations also creates the individual. However, Simmel adds that the authority of the group must always leave a large part of the individual's life outside of its scope. This area is left to the individual's free will, and here the individual is often freer in her private life than in her group life. (Spykman, 1965: 196). Simmel observes that the more the

individual as a whole is freed from social constraint, the more she voluntarily binds herself both to the distinctive aspects of her individual personality and to other social circles she chooses.

According to Simmel, an individual can be free within society or a social unit. He believes that an individual's freedom to shape her personality is a component of the social unit itself; at the same time, the individual is influenced by the society or the group with which she interacts, so it can be said that for Simmel, there is interplay between the individual and society. This interplay takes a specific form. I have suggested that Simmel perceives the individual as a free unity which can express its freedom in the appropriate environment. For Simmel, freedom and the externalisation of this freedom are what differentiates one individual from another (Spykman, 1965: 198). In this way, a singer feels free when he sings or an artist can feel free when she is creative in relation to her art. Thus, for Simmel, freedom is a personal experience which can be expressed under specific circumstances appropriate to each individual. This suggests that, for Simmel, each individual carries a unique personality which can be developed and displayed in the appropriate social circle or environment. In this sense, the individual has personal freedom which both shapes and is shaped by social reality. This kind of interplay is one of the aspects of the relationship between internal and external conversation.

For Simmel, it is equally important for an individual to feel free, to develop her own personality, and also to be a part of a social group. However, Simmel tries to identify something more than merely the 'norms' that people follow *en masse*. He recognises



that such normativity pivots on the individual self, that is, formed according to the way an individual interacts with herself and others.

Simmel considers that the will-to-dominate draws its satisfaction from the positive or negative condition of the other individual, whose response to the dominator is a product of her will<sup>3</sup>. In *Superordination and Subordination* (1950: 190-224), Simmel notes that domination is designed to break the *internal* resistance of the subjugated, whereas egoism usually aims only at victory over his *external* resistance. In addition, Simmel posits that, even in the most oppressive and cruel cases of subordination, there is still a considerable measure of *personal freedom*. The individual does not, however, become aware of it. The coercion which even the cruellest tyrant imposes upon the individual is always relative and tempered by the individual's desire to escape from the treatment of punishment. Simmel states that a relationship of super-subordination destroys the subordinate's freedom only in the case of direct physical violation. In every other case, this relationship solely demands a price for the realisation of freedom.

As I have shown, Simmel seeks to demonstrate the connection between inner freedom at the micro-level and social situations at a macro-level. His attempt to approach society through the individual and the individual through society offers unique means of understanding the interface between each individual's characteristics and wider social phenomena. He explains the importance of freedom on a personal level, and shows that the same personal characteristics remain vital within a wider social situation.

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<sup>3</sup> Simmel uses an example to clarify his point. He says that 'sociation' occurs as little as it does between the sculptor and his statue, although the statue, too, impacts upon the artist through his consciousness of his creative power.

### 1.2.3: Inner Needs and Social Forms.

Simmel sought to demonstrate a connection between the social or external environment of the individual and her inner state and potential development, and attempted to discover whether the changes that happen in the sphere outside of the individual follow the changes that happen inside:

The sociological forms of reciprocal behaviour, of unification, of presentation toward the outside, cannot follow, with any precise adaptation, the changes of their inside, that is, of the processes that occur in the individual in regard to the other. The two layers, relation and form, have different tempi of development; or it often is the nature of the external form not to develop properly at all (Simmel, 1950: 385).

According to Simmel, there are some processes which occur inside each individual; these are constantly under development. These processes have to do with the inner cosmos of every individual and the development of her personality. Conversely, sociological forms are processes that take place outside the individual that may develop in their own way and have, as Simmel says, 'different tempi of development'. Although he does not expand further upon his use of the term the term 'tempi', it is implied that the development takes place in different time phases. Sociological forms, or, as Simmel calls them, 'external' forms, influence the individual, but the way the individual organises part of her inner cosmos might be unable to adapt to any changes previously made in the external forms. What Simmel suggests, therefore, is that the inner cosmos of the individual does not necessarily change in synchrony with external forms. Although the inner cosmos of the individual is related to, and interacts with, the external social world, it may be seen from Simmel's observations that each of these two interrelated spheres possesses a degree of autonomy. He states that the individual has an inner freedom which separates her functions from the external world



and leaves her with space to develop her personality; he suggests at the same time that external forms also have autonomy:

Our inner life which we perceive as a stream, as an incessant process, as an up and down in our thoughts and moods, becomes crystallised, even for ourselves, in formulas and fixed directions often merely by the fact that we verbalize this life. Even if this leads only rarely to specific inadequacies; even if, in fortunate cases, the fixed external form constitutes the centre of gravity or indifference above and below which our life evenly oscillates; there still remains the fundamental, formal contrast between the essential flux and movement of the subjective psychic life and the limitations of its forms. These forms after all, do not express or shape an ideal, a contrast with life's reality, but this life itself (Simmel 1950: 385-386).

Here, Simmel appears to be making a distinction between the individual's inner life and the individual's life in more general terms. He describes the inner life as a process that consists of some elements, like thoughts and moods, which are internal private elements that belong to the inner cosmos of the individual. These thoughts and moods can be interpreted as elements of internal conversation, according to my definition of it in this work. For Simmel, these elements or processes constitute elements of what he construes as inner life, which comprises of elements that may also be understood as components of internal conversation.

Furthermore, Simmel suggests that this inner life can be verbalised (that is, externalised) through certain formulae. He suggests that the individual can externalise this inner life, or elements of it, according to certain unwritten regulations. These regulations and formulae are forms that operate outside the individual and her inner life. They can thus be described as external forms. In order to be more precise, we should link these forms within society: individuals must follow such external forms in order to externalise or verbalise elements of their inner life (the prime example of this would be the formulation and use of language.) Yet, as Simmel observes, these formulae have limitations, and thus inner life cannot be fully expressed or fully shared

with other individuals. External forms do not allow the individual to share her inner life with other individuals in its fullest. She keeps parts of her inner life unspoken of necessity.

Simmel continues by stating that there is a formal contrast between the essential flux of the subjective psychic life (that is, the inner life) and the limitations of its (external) forms of expression. The last part of the passage quoted above may be understood in various ways, but, for my purposes, it is interpreted as Simmel's direct attempt to distinguish between the individual's *inner life* and *life itself*. I maintain that Simmel understands the subjective psychic life as the inner life of every individual, and, as has been indicated above, internal conversation may be considered an element of this inner life. Therefore, according to Simmel, there is a private, personal and inner part of the individual's life, and at the same time there is another kind of life that represents all the limited interactions of every individual with everything outside her and one that follows certain forms and directions. Simmel's term for these forms is 'life itself', and all the internal processes that are not controlled by those forms he terms 'inner life'. On this basis, internal conversation takes place within the 'inner life', whereas external conversation takes place within 'life itself'.

However, there is a contradiction in Simmel's analysis. While he considers the individual and the individual's interactions to be the basis of society, and although he cannot separate the individual from the society, he insists at the same time that the individual needs to develop her personality separately from the social environment, and he makes a sharp distinction between 'life itself' and the 'inner life'. An interpretation that might hold here is that 'life' is to be identified as the combination



of two autonomous, and at the same time connected, elements: the 'inner life' and the 'external' or 'social' or 'exterior' life. Thus Simmel apparently contradicts himself in different parts of his work; this suggesting that he was not clear about how the individual can maintain her privacy whilst simultaneously being the basic element of society.

In a later section of *Superordination and Subordination*, Simmel states that the forms, whether of individual or social life, do not flow like our inner development, but always remain fixed over a certain period of time. It is clear that he recognises the forms that express life itself as having a level of autonomy. They do not develop according to the individual's inner life; rather it is in their nature at times to be ahead of inner reality and at other times to lag behind it. When life, which pulsates beneath, outlives and breaks these forms, it swings to the opposite extreme, creating forms ahead of itself which are not yet completely filled by it. In short, the temporal phasing of internal and external development are not necessarily synchronised.

Simmel argues that the forms that 'control' the individual's everyday life, whether directly or indirectly, remain unchanged for some time. This means that, while the individual's inner life changes and develops, the forms that direct her social life may remain stable and not adjust to the individual's new needs and thoughts. If, on occasion, these forms are no longer satisfactory, life will create forms ahead of itself.

To adapt Simmel's analysis to the present investigation of internal and external conversation, it can be noted that external conversation is part of internal conversation, shaped as it is according to social or external formulae and directions.

However, these forms, formulae and directions do not always follow the inner life's transformations, or indeed the directions and needs of internal conversation: therefore, they must change sometimes as a consequence. To illustrate this, I offer parallel examples of the relationship between sexuality and society. On the one hand, when people wish to feel free to talk about their sexual orientation, the forms of social life may not 'permit' it. On the other hand, if a person moves from a strictly conservative and homophobic society to a society which is liberal and tolerant to homosexuality, it is the individual's external and internal conversation that must change and not society's forms: the forms may thus change rapidly, ahead of the individual's expectations or needs.

This can be also demonstrated by an example from Greece, where many people had expressed their approval of a terrorist group called '17 November' believing it to be a large group controlled by various famous rich people. However, when the group was disbanded, it was discovered that its members were serial killers, with no specific ideological perspective; instead, they came from a marginal sub-class and simply enjoyed killing people. At this discovery, the mass media began to castigate those who had expressed support for '17 November', condemning all those who believed that these terrorists were acting out of beneficent ideologies (a kind of Robin Hood scenario), and, as a result, many people were confused and did not know what to believe. For more than 25 years they had articulated their support for the terrorist group; but a crucial form of social life had abruptly altered, and these people were forced to change too, to adjust their external conversation to new forms that were ahead of their individual expectations or beliefs.



#### 1.2.4: Conflict and Harmony.

One area of exploration that Simmel uses to address the notion of the individual is the capacity the individual has to decompose herself into parts, and to comprehend any of these as her proper self. Simmel believes that it is possible for any of these parts to collide with another, and thus result in a struggle for control over the individual's actions. According to Simmel, this capacity places the individual into an often contradictory relationship with her impulses and interests, which are not pre-empted by her social character. Thus, the conflict between society and the individual may continue within the individual herself through the conflict between her component parts, and the basic struggle between society and the individual may be seen in the general form of individual life (Simmel, 1950: 141).

Simmel maintains that every individual consists of many different, equally important and sometimes contradictory parts that may cause internal conflict within that person. This can be observed in each person's everyday life. Each individual consists of different parts which can be contradictory. For example, someone who tries to maintain a slimming diet might have another part inside her that definitely wants to eat a burger; or an individual might want to save money to pay her rent, but a part of her cannot resist buying a new pair of shoes. Every day each person faces issues that she internally debates; usually there are at least two different, and sometimes opposing, views involved. Although these conversations take place internally, they do not only represent the individual's views. The individual might debate internally about what she wants to do and what she has to do. For example, the inner part of an individual might try to convince her that she can wear her sexy new dress to her



parents' party, because she likes the dress very much; but another, social part of herself may try to reason that the dress is completely inappropriate to the occasion. Thus, it can be seen that Simmel's understanding of contradictory inner relationships may reflect reality with no little accuracy.

At the same time, this contradiction might become apparent and be externalised by the individual, and thus might, by implication, constitute a social form of externalisation. For example, when someone is invited to dinner, the expected form of polite behaviour would be to eat whatever the hosts have prepared; but the guest may be vegetarian and the hosts might have cooked only meat. The guest can see the effort the hosts have made to please her with the menu they have prepared, but at the same time, she does not wish to eat meat. The guest chooses to express her concern, to explain how distressed she is because, on the one hand, she does not want to insult her friends, but on the other it is not acceptable for her to eat the meal. In this example, the conflict has been externalised in the external conversation the guest has had with the hosts. Such conflicts are quite common. A mother may insist that her son come home early from a party he wants to attend, or a father may refuse to buy his daughter a car. Such conflicts constitute everyday experiences, and some are resolved, while others are not.

Thus, the elements that Simmel identifies may be seen either as inner parts of the self or as somewhere between the inner part of the self and the external environment. Simmel suggests that this can place the individual in a situation in which her inner needs and her social character conflict with or contradict each other. In other words, the individual's internal conversation might be different from the conversation the

social environment enjoins the individual to produce. Internal conversation represents the individual's deepest beliefs, which most of the time do not become verbal-external conversation, because the social environment (by which I mean the social character the individual has chosen to enact according to general social directions) does not 'approve' of them. This results in a conflict within the individual between her internal beliefs and needs and external social guidance. It may be suggested that the struggle between society and the individual is transferred as a conflict between internal and external conversation.

There is one point that must be emphasised in relation to the above analysis. According to Simmel's approach, the different parts of the individual can be in conflict (Spykman, 1965: 30). As previously stated, internal and external conversation can be in conflict and, in all likelihood, this happens very often. The relationship between internal and external conversation might take the form of a confrontational relationship. In everyday life, the individual faces a struggle between her inner orientations and social directions. This struggle does not result in a single decision that will place the individual on one or other bank of the river; rather, the continuous struggle forms the relationship between the individual's internal needs and external forces (or internal and external conversation). Consequently, it might be argued that the relationship that I am exploring here, that is, the relationship between internal and external conversation, is located, in the framework of Simmel's theory, in a constant conflict within the individual. In presenting his idea of conflict in general, Simmel helps us understand the specific antithesis that causes the conflict in the context previously presented:

I should like to think that the efforts of mankind will produce ever more numerous and varied forms for the human personality to affirm itself and to



demonstrate the value of its existence. In fortunate periods, these varied forms may order themselves into harmonious wholes. In doing so, their contradictions and conflicts will cease to be mere obstacles to mankind's efforts: they will also stimulate new demonstrations of the strength of these efforts and lead them to new creations (Simmel, 1950: 84).

Simmel presents an additional view of the inner parts of every individual (what he calls the 'varied forms of human personality' in the extract above), which, as they multiply, affirm the inner existence of the individual. I interpret this to mean that, as the internal conversation of every individual is developed, the individual becomes more personal and unique. Thus, as Simmel might suggest, in periods of happiness, the individual can combine her internal and external conversations (or, as Simmel would say, her varied forms or parts) in a harmonious relationship. In these periods, the inner conflicts and the contradictions the individual usually experiences (as internal conversation struggles with social-external conversation) will cease. Therefore, the relationship between internal and external conversation can also be harmonious and, when this happens, mankind's efforts then lead then to new creations and innovations. In other words, when there is a balance and a coexistence between internal and external conversation, the individual can move forward and be creative and calm; conversely, if this relationship is based on a conflict, the individual becomes insecure and constantly tries to find the way to gain a balanced relationship. Significantly, the desired internal balance each individual seeks to achieve is subjectively defined by each one of us.

Simmel's views concerning 'harmony/balance', 'synthesis' and 'conflict' will be further elaborated in the final chapters of this thesis, where I will analyse the Simmelian view concerning the inner contradictions and conflicts more extensively.



At this point, it is important to underline that Simmel's<sup>4</sup> understanding regarding the individual's ability to recompose herself and resolve everyday conflicts through internal conversation will constitute one of the basic rationales of this thesis. As I will argue in the later chapters, the individual's endless attempts to achieve the subjectively desired balance (for each individual) between social and the private priorities constitute a Simmelian rationale, which forms the basis of the present study.

### 1.3: The Goffmanian contribution.

#### 1.3.1: Society and the Self.

As Williams (1998) notes, Goffman sought to provide what he regarded as a distinctly sociological account of the person and so he treated as irrelevant the large variety of ways that people think about their own or other peoples' 'inner lives'. Goffman did not explore an individual's full depth of human motivation, feelings, intentions, consciousness and so on, because, as Williams explains, he was not concerned with describing or theorising about the self; rather he believed that in order to understand the self sociologically it had to be approached as a social institution, and researched by analysing externally observable forms of conduct.

To aid understanding of Goffman's theories about the self, I will here present an overview of the main ways in which he classified the self. The first is called the 'two selves' version, and appears in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, published in 1956. Goffman presents the self as made-up of two separate entities, which he calls

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<sup>4</sup> For further discussion on Simmel, see:

Simmel, G. (1971); Simmel G, (1984); Simmel, G. (1859); Frisby, D. & Featherstone, M. (1997)

‘character’ and ‘performer’. Here, Goffman’s main interest is the organisation and management of the roles/characters assumed by the self-as-performer. In *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (1962), Goffman introduced his second version, according to which the self arises not merely out of its possessor’s interactions with others, but also out of the contextual arrangements that evolve in the organisation of its members. In Goffman’s final version, the self is not half-concealed behind events, but is a changeable formula for ‘managing’ during them (Williams, 1998: 155-156). A summary of Goffman’s versions of self is offered by Giddens:

the self consists in an awareness of identity which simultaneously transcends specific roles and provides an integrating means of relating them to personal biography; and furnishes a set of dispositions for managing the transactions between motives and expectations ‘scripted’ by particular roles (Giddens, 1987: 18).

Archer states, conversely, that Goffman does not provide a satisfactory definition of self; she argues that we should find out who this ‘self’ is which

owes nothing to society but is thoroughly conversant with its ways and how it comes to be. This is a debt that Goffman left unsettled by his question-beginning definition – ‘a self is a repertoire of behaviour appropriate to a different set of contingences’ (Archer, 2000: 78).

In Goffman’s work, it is difficult to find an isolated fragment with regard to the self *per se*. According to Goffman, the understanding of self derives from a rather general essence that the reader comprehends in his work. Goffman constantly avoids examining the inner processes of the individual (and thus the self), yet he leaves the reader with the sense that the self is not a private, personal entity, but can adapt and operate according to the external environment. This view is not inaccurate, as long as it incorporates the freedom and ability of the individual to choose and adjust; but Goffman does not use the concept of inner freedom and will to describe the self. He prefers to describe the self in relation to social and external responses. For Goffman,



therefore, the self can perform a role in a better or worse way, can interact with other selves in multiple ways, can even produce 'self-talk' (as will be discussed later), but the self cannot be studied as a unity, as an aspect of the individual's private life. Thus Goffman only allows us to see how he perceives the self in relation to other selves.

Since he attempts to investigate the individual and the self through sociological patterns and views, it is clear that Goffman's interest in the individual has resonances for the present study. However, his understanding of the individual is strongly rooted in its relation to society, and he fails to address the idea of the self without relating it to the social environment. The way Goffman perceives the individual leaves little space for the elaboration of the individual's freedom, autonomy, reflexivity and deliberation; rather, for Goffman, the individual cannot be studied independently from society. His contribution to the understanding of internal conversation is therefore limited; however, some key concepts in his work (such as the roles, the secrets and 'go between', and the desired balance) will constitute central notions in my work. Furthermore, his contribution with regard to external conversation is undeniable and his views on interaction provide valuable departures concerning the understanding of mediation process.

### 1.3.2: Role Concepts.

Central emphasis is placed on the notion of roles by Goffman, who states: 'role consists of the activity the incumbent would engage in were he to act solely in terms of the normative demands upon someone in his position. 'Role' in this normative sense is to be distinguished from role performance or role enactment, which is the

actual conduct of a particular individual while on duty in his position' (Goffman, 1961: 75). Goffman suggests that individuals perform roles which are in large measure pre-set for them, and that these roles must be performed by every individual: individuals who fail or refuse to perform their roles can be characterised as 'deviant'. The individual's role enactment occurs largely through a circle of face-to-face social situations with role-others, that is to say, the relevant audience.

Goffman's concept indicates that he believes that each individual has a specific place in society, which he terms 'role', and that society has a specific task or role for each person. Goffman perceives action as a performance in a role an individual is supposed to perform. Therefore, although he focuses on the individual, he studies it only insofar as this individual interacts with other individuals, for example as they produce conversation. It becomes apparent that Goffman is not interested in what I call 'internal conversation', but solely in 'external conversation', since external conversation can emerge only when two or more individuals interact.

Goffman supports the view that the overall role, as a subject of investigation, is associated with a position and falls into sub-roles or role-sectors. Therefore, it could be said that when a person performs a role, he or she has to produce a specific kind of external conversation. Analogously, sub-roles can also be seen as sub-categories of external conversation. As Goffman says, a doctor may perform sub-roles while he is in a hospital: he will produce different external conversation when he talks to a nurse than when he talks to a patient. Yet Goffman does not explain why people perform the same roles in different ways. For example, several doctors might be equally good in their profession, but differ significantly in their behaviour towards their patients.



According to my thesis, this difference in the doctors' projected performance derives from different kinds of internal conversations<sup>5</sup> and, of course, derives from the uniqueness that distinguishes each individual. As Goffman has it, however, role-sectors are predefined and individuals merely adapt the role whenever they have to adjust to a different social environment: different external conversations relate to different external social environments and circumstances. In short, Goffman relates the source of conversation and action to external stimuli and circumstances, and consequently does not identify any degree of freedom or autonomy within the individual. For Goffman the individual acts and reacts according to the social environment that she finds herself in and not according to her personal, inner uniqueness.

Goffman also links role performance to Socialisation<sup>6</sup>. He offers the view that 'in entering the position, the incumbent finds that he must take on the whole array of action encompassed by the corresponding role, so role implies a social determinism and a doctrine about Socialisation' (Goffman, 1961: 76-77). Since Goffman suggests that role is the basic unit of Socialisation (because he proposes that it is through roles that tasks in society are allocated and arrangements made to enforce their performance), roles could in fact be understood as society's rules. The individual who expresses herself through roles is actually following society's rules, and it is according to these rules that the individual's external conversation is shaped. For Goffman, Socialisation is a process that takes place externally in the social world of the individual. This is true; yet each person has different ways of internalising social

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<sup>5</sup> The findings of an exploratory interviews, conducted to examine how individuals interpret internal conversation, support the hypothesis that many individuals clarify internally how to speak to different people in different situations. For further discussion see Chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup> Socialisation in Goffman's work is understood as interaction between people.

and external stimuli. For Goffman, the individual is shaped through Socialisation and the individual learns to adopt social roles and rules.

However, if it were the case that social rules or roles were to dominate our inner existence, individuals would not be individuals; instead they would be nothing more than like members of a social unit. Yet people are different and they produce different external conversations within the same social environments. This suggests that the source of each individual's externalisation must be different from any other's, otherwise all individuals would produce identical external conversations and perform broadly alike in similar roles. Yet, as Simmel suggested, every individual has a degree of freedom to shape and develop his or her inner existence and not merely become a 'social ego'.

The function of the role is another issue that Goffman emphasises in suggesting that the terms 'eufunction' and 'dysfunction' be employed to distinguish supportive efforts from destructive ones. This implies that the functioning of a role in terms of success depends on how well society works. Dysfunctional roles, that is, dysfunctional external conversations, thus derive from dysfunctional socialisation and not from any kind of inner cause. In this way, Goffman implies that society is responsible for each individual's dysfunctional aspect or action. Goffman is correct in saying that a problem in an individual's socialisation might cause a dysfunction for that person; but there are also many dysfunctions people themselves cause. If, for example, part of a person's socialisation is to sell, buy and use drugs, society is responsible for this dysfunctional case. If this person then kills other individuals for some dysfunctional reason, again we would have to blame society. Yet, while it is true that society holds a



great deal of responsibility in such instances, individuals are also responsible: not all criminals are victims of dreadful circumstances; sometimes they themselves create such situations. People are responsible for their actions in the eyes of the law and they are responsible because they are free to choose. All people who have socialised within the same dysfunctional environment do not necessarily become dysfunctional adults, and the difference calls for explanation.

Each individual is unique and acts in a unique way which differentiates her from anyone else. This uniqueness, however, does not derive from society, but (as will be discussed in later chapters) from the individual's interaction with herself and society. Although Goffman was right to stress the importance of interaction, he studied only how society structures such interactions and not the individual's contribution to each interaction; however, the individual is not merely an actor who interacts with others in preformed ways. I will argue in this study that the uniqueness of each individual derives from the social expectations each individual experiences but also from her personal responses towards them. Thus, while Socialisation and the social environment *per se* influence the individual, it is the individual who ultimately determines much of what to internalise, what to be critical about and what to deny.

According to Goffman (1961), attachment or commitment to a role is understood as the repeated performance of the same role by an individual. Individuals have committed their self-feelings to it as demonstrated by their behaviour. Goffman also suggests that it is considered sound mental hygiene for an individual to be attached to the role she performs, especially if she is a committed and regular performer of that role. Commitment and attachment to a role are acceptable, desirable expressions by

each individual to make her pleasing to another individual. Yet, Goffman avers, they are not the outcome of an inner decision. Attachment to a role might be understood as the way some individuals believe they should act, or as the means to perform their jobs effectively. However, many people have to repeat the same role every day (for example, a receptionist or a bus driver), but it does not necessarily follow that these people are attached to their roles; many of them, in fact, would be happy to change their roles. Furthermore, the repetition of a performance, and hence a possible habitual performance, cannot necessarily be characterised as 'attachment to a role'. Again, many people have to repeat the same performance every day (for example, to send/receive e-mail, answer the phone politely, cook dinner), but this does not mean that they feel attached to a specific role. As I will discuss in later chapters, individuals might display attachment to a role because their priority system perceives this action as important. A person might want to be a good father or a good Buddhist or a distinguished academic and this desire might make the individual consider important all the relevant elements in his priority actions. In light of this, it is apparent that, while Goffman's observations concerning roles are not inaccurate, roles require further explanation.

Goffman displays considerable interest in the term 'embrace'. To embrace a role is to disappear completely into the virtual self available in the situation, to be fully seen in terms of the image, and to confirm expressively one's acceptance of it. As Goffman puts it, 'to embrace a role is to be embraced by it' (1961: 106). His interpretation and analysis of roles, and the specific kinds he identifies, might be understood in metaphorical terms as an attempt to interpret and analyse the waves of the sea and to categorise them into specific kinds; however, at the same time,



Goffman completely neglects what is under the surface of the sea. Similarly, he discusses an identified role which the individual chooses to embrace, but he fails to explain why a particular individual embraces this specific role and not any other, or how many roles a person can embrace and which role of many expresses the individual the most. Yet, if we cannot answer such questions, we cannot know who the individual is. Where does the role end and the individual begin?

To summarise, Goffman's analysis of society can be seen to place the individual at the centre of his examination, but he perceives the individual as a social unit. However, while his research on the individual is not concerned with the individual's inner life, Goffman's work on roles provides an extremely valuable perception of society and the individual. His observations concerning the different kinds of roles people perform – and there may be many more kinds of roles people perform – are valid, but what he does not address is where these roles are derived from.

As I will discuss in the last two chapters, Goffman's understanding of roles has guided me to offer an analogous view concerning the individual's hierarchies and priorities. Every person has specific concerns or priorities in everyday life, but also in life generally. Individuals make their own way through life according these priorities. For example, if a doctor's profession is important to him, this might led him to perform the role of doctor to the highest standard; this is what Goffman calls 'embracement' of a role. These priorities, however, are not purely social constructs, as Goffman suggests. I will argue that each person has a degree of freedom and independent (as Simmel suggests), according to which each individual forms her inner personal priorities and hierarchies of them. At the same time the social environment

and the individual's interaction with it form social priorities (or roles, in Goffman's terms) that each person understands in her own way. The endless ways that social and private hierarchies contradict and complete each other constitute the uniqueness of every person. What we can learn from Goffman's views, therefore, is that individuals indeed perform different roles, possibly in endless combinations. What remains to be discovered is where those patterns and constellations derive from and why; this I will discuss more fully in the final chapters of this study.

### 1.3.3: Alienation from Interaction.

In a later study, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-face Behaviour* (1971), Goffman displays an increasing interest in situations in which the individual does not fully participate during an interaction. For example, while an individual is listening to a speaker, she may engage in other goal-oriented activities, such as chewing gum, smoking, adopting a comfortable sitting position, performing repetitive tasks and so on, without being distracted from her main focus of attention. Such activities can be identified in our everyday interactions, but it is not clear from Goffman's analysis whether those activities are the outcome of the interaction with other people or with ourselves.

Citing Adam Smith (1774), Goffman proposes that,

the individual must phrase his own concerns and feelings and interests in such a way as to make these maximally useable by the others as a source of appropriate involvement; and this major obligation of the individual qua interactant is balanced by his right to expect that others present will make some effort to stir up their sympathies and place them at his command. [...] Thus the speaker has to scale down his expressions and the listener to scale up his interests [...] to form the bridge that people build to one another [...] (Goffman, 1971: 116).



Here Goffman proposes a new interpretation of role. A main argument of my thesis is that external conversation derives from internal conversation, but what Goffman suggests is that, during an interaction, an individual must not externalise a part of his inner thoughts ('scale down his expressions') and thus not articulate some of the things he believes or feels. Indirectly, and probably unintentionally, Goffman and Smith thus argue that the individual must hide something and keep some things unexpressed. There must be something more than conversation *per se*, or action or interaction between individuals, something that the individual can and indeed must not articulate. I posit that this is internal conversation.

Goffman also observes that, during an interaction, the individual might focus her attention upon herself more than she should. This might happen in many ways; the pertinent thing is that Goffman identifies this action. To apply this to my thesis, it might be said that, during an interaction with others, an individual might prefer or need to concentrate on her internal conversation which can range from daydreaming to self-monitoring given the appropriate stimulus. For example, Goffman discusses the phenomenon of embarrassment as a source of self-consciousness, as he calls it, or as a reason for the individual giving attention to herself. Embarrassment is a result of internal conversation, although the stimuli of this are external. Embarrassment itself is private feeling which may or may not be expressed.

At this point we may identify a Goffmanian approach to internal and external conversation. As mentioned above, Goffman presents embarrassment as having an external stimulus. He also suggests that embarrassment may drive the individual into her own thoughts, behaviour which is not acceptable during interaction with others.

What he suggests, therefore, is that an individual can internalise an external stimulus (in this case, embarrassment) and that he can externalise an internal process in an unacceptable manner (that is, not perform a role in a desirable way).

For example, Goffman explains that when an individual becomes over-involved in a topic of conversation, giving others the impression that he does not have the necessary measure of self-control over his feelings and actions, others are likely to withdraw from involvement with the speaker. One person's over-eagerness will result in another's alienation (Goffman, 1971: 123). An individual can become over-involved in a conversation, expressing herself/inner conversation in a more obvious way than others, like a child or a king saying without hesitation what he wants or how he feels. As well as having the potential to be studied as a means of alienation from interactants (as Goffman puts it), this situation may also be viewed as an opportunity to know something of the speaker's inner existence. The effective work of mediator, or 'filter', is limited at such point. Clearly, the balance the individual is required to keep is not achieved; but we can gain an indication of the source of the person's over-involvement. The concept of balance which Goffman introduced will be discussed in detail below. The desired inner balance every individual tries to achieve will be one of the central features of mediation process.

#### 1.3.4: Discrepant Roles.

In 1956, Goffman published a complex study on secrets, in which he described secrets as information within a team which had to be controlled. He does not define such secrets, but presents types of secrets, systematically avoiding making a connection



between secrets and any kind of inner process within the individual. Goffman calls his first category 'dark secrets', facts about a team which it knows and conceals, and which are incompatible with the image of self that the team attempts to maintain before its audience. Another category, 'strategic secrets', relates to intentions and capacities of the team which are concealed from its audience in order to prevent them from responding effectively to the state of affairs the team is planning to bring about. (Armies and businesses employ strategic secrets in designing future actions against the opposition.) Goffman also refers to 'inside secrets', whose possession marks an individual as being a member of a group and helps the group to feel separate and distinct from those individuals who are not 'in the know' (Goffman, 1956: 123-125).

Goffman suggests that the knowledge that a given team can have of another's secrets provides us with two further types of secret: 'entrusted secrets', which the possessor is obliged to keep because of his relation to the team to which the secret refers, and 'free secrets', which are somebody else's secrets that are known to oneself and that one could disclose without discrediting the image one was presenting to oneself (Goffman, 1956: 125)<sup>7</sup>. According to the types of secret he introduces, Goffman observes this phenomenon within teams (groups). If a group of people can keep a secret, it follows that each individual member of the group also has to keep this secret. Even if Goffman does not define the notion of secrets at the level of the individual, we can understand that it is impossible to categorise types of secrets that a team can

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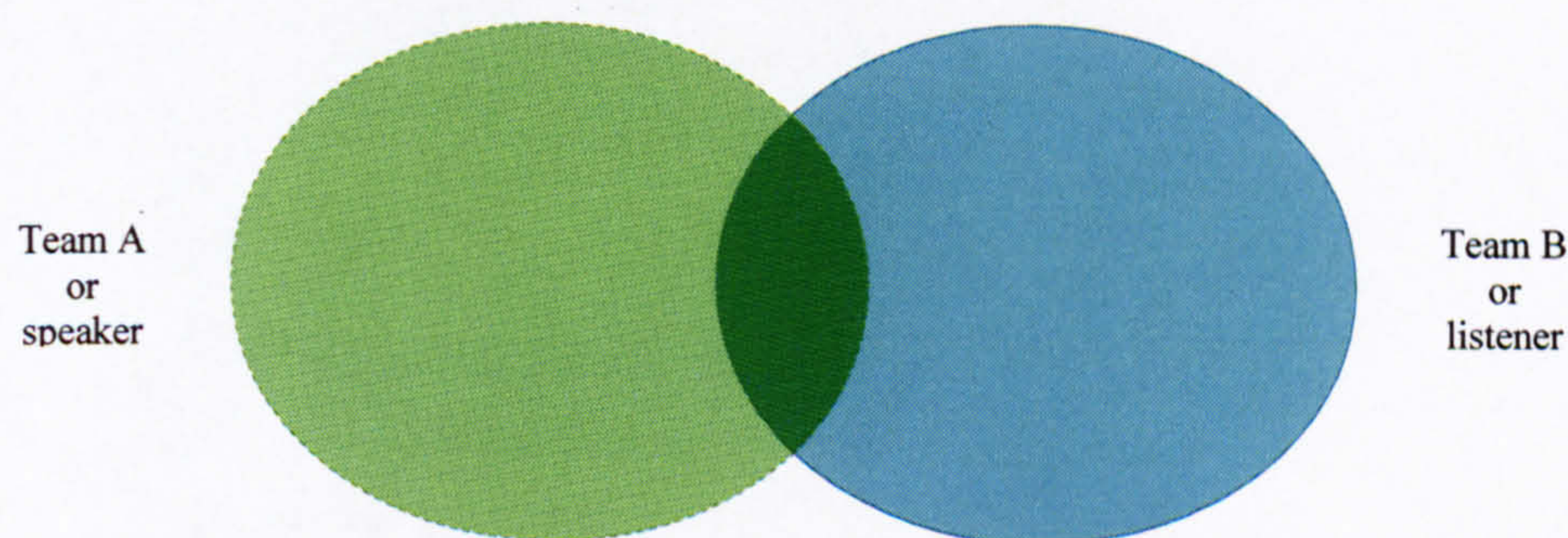
<sup>7</sup> In the present study, 'secrets' are evidence that people keep thoughts, incidents, facts, information to themselves. This is a common definition and, in the exploratory interviews I took from randomly selected individuals, only one or two respondents said that they neither lie nor ever keep secrets from others. People who admit that they keep secrets or, as it was put it in the interview question (for further discussion see chapter 4), who admit that they keep some thoughts, events, dreams, opinions exclusively to themselves, admit at the same time they have an inner 'space' in which they keep those secrets and that they experience an inner process that allows this to happen. In Goffman's approach, however, it is not clear exactly what he considers a 'secret' to be.

keep which the individual does not; thus, if Goffman identifies different kinds of secrets within teams, those same types also apply to individuals. Therefore, as Goffman explores the notion of secrets through human groups and teams, we shall attempt to relate his approach to the individual.

Moreover, several individuals are involved in a team. Each individual develops different internal conversations, has his or her own thoughts, ambitions, views and feelings. The individual can choose not to share some of them with other members of the team, and thus members of the team do not all have the same knowledge of the same things (whether or not these are relevant to their team). This suggests a question: does this situation mean that every individual keeps secrets from other members of the team? Goffman is not clear about the nature of a secret within a team. It might also be argued that only certain members of the team have access to specific information, so are they keeping a secret from the others or not? Is every individual's privacy in a team to be considered in terms of a secret? If a secret is defined as such only between disparate teams, this means that every team keeps secrets from another team. What kind of secret could it be if only a part of 'the population' (people from one team) knows about it? It is not easy to understand precisely what Goffman means. What seems certain, however, is that a secret is something that some people do not know about, but, if so, who are those who are outside the secret? Besides, most of our thoughts and feelings remain unexpressed, unspoken. Why does Goffman not consider these to be secrets? Ultimately, if one team can keep a secret from another team, so an individual can surely keep a secret from his own team. Who knows what the secrets are and who keeps secrets from whom?



Goffman introduces another discrepant role which he calls the 'go between' or 'mediator'. The go-between learns the secrets of each side and gives each side the impression that he will keep its secrets. According to Goffman, the role of go-between seems to be especially significant in informal, convivial interaction. When one individual in a conversational circle engages in action or speech which receives the attention of the others present, she might define the situation in a way that is not easily acceptable to her audience. The mediator might have to translate and transmit the differences between speaker and listeners into a view that is more collectively acceptable than the original projection (Goffman, 1956: 131-132). This leads us to connect the role of go-between with the process of mediation that the individual employs between the transition from internal to external conversation or vice versa. The following figure, which represents the mediator as the shared space between team A and team B (or speaker and listener), illustrates Goffman's interpretation of mediation:





According to Goffman, the mediator acts as a third interactant, defining or translating a situation that needs to be explained. The mediator receives two different external conversations (one from A and another from B) and tries to present them in a more comprehensible way. The role of Goffman's mediator, therefore, is to help the conversation to continue, thus avoiding misunderstandings and saving time. This is exactly the way 'mediation' functions, as a process that operates between internal and external conversation. Given that people or teams sometimes need a go-between or a mediator (such as an objective observer) to keep the balance between them during a conversation, it may be supposed that individuals have the self-same need. It must be noted, however, that the person who mediates between two interactants to help them resolve a misunderstanding is not merely a 'postman' who carries messages between the interactants. She has her own opinions and she is not neutral. Similarly, we do not externalise whatever we think because there is an internal process that helps us 'protect' ourselves from expressing potential misunderstandings, and it would appear that this inner process is not neutral either. Again, this process is mediated when we interpret other people's external conversation before we register the information that is given to us.

If we attempt to connect the Goffmanian mediator to his analysis of secrets, we can argue that, if whatever the individual does not share with others can be perceived as a secret, the process or role of mediator is to translate those secrets and selectively present some of them as external conversation. The mediator, therefore, is responsible for what the individual will maintain as secret/unspoken and what will be shared with others. In any case, the mediator 'knows' both sides, that is, what the individual does not say and what she externalises. This is exactly how the Goffmanian mediator



functions. Here, the individual who performs the role is aware of both sides, but presents to each side whatever he or she believes would be more appropriate, based on her subjective judgement and evaluation. I will analyse in detail the concept of go-between in relation to mediation in later chapters.

### 1.3.5: Self-Talk.

In *Forms of Talk* (1981), Goffman introduced the term 'self-talk', which is the closest approach to internal conversation that he attempts in his work. Goffman suggests that 'to talk to oneself is to generate a full complement of two communication roles - speaker and hearer - without a full complement of role-performers, and which of the two roles - speaker or hearer - is the one without its own real performer is not the first issue' (Goffman, 1981: 80). This is one of the few times that Goffman analyses an individual outside the social context. Here he refers to the process of self-talk without considering this phenomenon within an interactional sphere, and suggests that a person could simultaneously be both a hearer of and a speaker to herself. This description is very close to the notion of internal conversation because, as it will be discussed in the following chapter, conversation consists of an internal hearer and speaker.

The term was first introduced by Vygotsky ([1934]1962)<sup>8</sup>, who referred to self-talk (voiced speech used to direct behaviour) as being within a child's capacity from the age of two. Vygotsky also referred to 'inner-speech' as being the internalised self-talk of children. When self-talk is actually external talk (talking out-loud), Goffman states

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<sup>8</sup> For further discussion on Vygotsky see Chapter 3.

that self-talk may be characterised as a form of ego-centricity, a term used by Piaget (1926) to refer to the perception of the world that children have and which is in terms of the self<sup>9</sup>. Goffman was influenced by developmental psychologists and employed a term that they had coined (to analyse children's characteristics) to describe a generalised phenomenon that every individual experiences. It is notable that Goffman adopted not only the term, but also the basic connotations of this term (that is, egocentricity and externalisation); he was not, however, interested in the conflict that developed between Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories.

According to Goffman, the purpose of speech is to express thoughts to others, and a self-talker necessarily expresses them to someone who already knows them: 'To interrogate, inform, beseech, persuade, threaten, or command oneself is to push against oneself or at best to get to where one already is, in either case with small chance of achieving movement. To say something to someone who isn't there to hear it seems equally footless' (Goffman, 1981: 80). Here, Goffman relegates the importance or the scope of self-talk, presenting the process as one in which some individuals do engage but, above all, as a futile experience, since they do not produce significant effects (such as self-resolve, self-determination or self-control) but merely convey previously known information or feelings.

He goes further in contending that self-talk could also be perceived as aberrant. He supports this view by saying that people who prefer to talk to themselves do not need the company of others; they do not need to socialise or exchange conversation with others. This interpretation might be evaluated as superficial, but it requires further

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<sup>9</sup> Piaget also observes that pre-school children may develop collective monologues; he characterises these as disconnected conversations. For further discussion on Piaget see Chapter 3.



investigation. When Goffman refers to self-talk, he means the external conversation individuals produce when they vocalise their thoughts, but address them to themselves. He does not perceive self-talk as an internal process, but rather as an externalised private conversation. He is referring to people who talk to themselves as they walk amongst strangers, or when they are alone, or when they are under pressure. These instances are in any case quite rare; the most obvious and frequent illustration of such a case would be mentally unstable or pathologically disturbed individuals. However, Goffman is not referring to deviant cases, but to people who just feel the need to talk to themselves aloud.

Goffman examines a relatively rare phenomenon, yet he evaluates it in a superficial way. He recognises the fact that individuals can actually address questions, commands or threats to themselves, but that, when they do so externally, this process is pointless since they say to themselves things they already know. In recognising that the same individual can be her own hearer and speaker, he introduces part of the interface between internal and external conversation, since self-talk, as Goffman presents it, is not a purely internal or external conversation. However, he completely ignores the process of mediation in his discussion of self-talk, since he presents it without further elaboration as an individual articulating what she thinks at that moment. I shall analyse this point more extensively below, but first, it is necessary to investigate Goffman's thoughts on self-talk in detail.

According to Goffman, self-talk is an out-loud version of reverie. He states, however, that such a view 'misses the sense in which daydreaming is different from silent, fugue like, well reasoned discussion with oneself, let alone the point (on which Piaget

(1926: 7) and Vygotsky ([1934]1962: 19-20) seem to agree) that the out-loud version of reverie and constructive thought may precede the silent versions developmentally' (Goffman, 1981: 80). Although Goffman does not define precisely what he means by 'reverie', we can see that he is describing self-talk as an out-loud version of it, and that is the important aspect, which Goffman emphasises: the fact that self-talk is out-loud. It seems clear that he wants it to be understood that self-talk is not a silent procedure, but he does not explicitly exclude the possibility that self-talk may include silent expression.

Goffman believes that, in our society, a 'taboo' is placed on self-talk. Individuals cannot constantly talk aloud to themselves because this would not be considered acceptable behaviour by others. He recognises, however, that it is only through self-observation that an individual can recognise this process. He also suggests that, with self-talk, a kind of impersonation is occurring, since we do not view ourselves as a different person, and thus our speech is somehow 'neutral', without emotional characterisations. But Goffman insists that public self-talk is not appropriate and that society does not condone it. According to Goffman, 'self-talk is taken to involve the talker in a situationally inappropriate way. Our self-talk – like other 'mental symptoms' – is a threat to intersubjectivity; [...] self-talk is less an offence in private than in public' (Goffman, 1981: 85). It becomes apparent that Goffman perceives self-talk as being an antisocial process and, for this reason, he fails to examine this aspect of talk in more depth.

Goffman thus sees self-talk as a disturbing process which should not take place in front of others. He proposes the rule of 'not talking to oneself in public' and explains



that self-talk is like 'catching a snail outside its shell, [in that] words are here caught outside of conversations, outside of ratified states of talk' (Goffman, 1981: 88). Goffman offers many examples of self-talk in everyday situations which allow the production of such conversation, but it could be argued that the most representative example would be the one of the young child as she is talking to herself whilst at play. At that stage of development (as Vygotsky and Piaget observe), this kind of talk would not be considered to be problematic or antisocial: this period of an individual's development involves self-talk, it is a part of her growing-up. Piaget considers egocentric talk to be antisocial, but, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, Vygotsky sees it as expressing internal conversation, which the individual will gradually learn to keep unspoken as she grows up.

Having presented Goffman's views on self-talk, we should now examine how his approach could be used to expand upon my basic subject, the relationship between internal and external conversation. Goffman does not explain where self-talk derives from, but he does recognise that a person could have private thoughts which would be inappropriate to externalise in public as self-talk. This is not necessarily problematic. Although self-talk derives from an inner source, which is internal conversation, it only constitutes problematic or unusual behaviour when a person starts saying aloud whatever comes to her mind. Self-talk, as Goffman describes it, is probably not such an antisocial procedure as he would have the reader believe, but neither is it the most common form of talk.

What is interesting, however, is where the process of mediation (the process between internal and external conversation) fits. As I will argue, the mediation process

constitutes the selective interpretation of internal conversation before it becomes external, or the selective elucidation of external conversation before it becomes internal. What happens, however, in the case of self-talk? Self-talk is not an entirely internal conversation since it is externalised; but neither is it properly external, since it addresses the self. Therefore the question is: where is mediation placed in the relation to the two forms of conversation – internal and external?

The answer is neither easy nor clear. Self-talk is a kind of conversation which includes internal and external elements. It is internal, in that the individual addresses herself, and it is external, in that the individual externalises her internal conversation. The problem is the fact that we can never be sure of the amount of internal conversation self-talk entails, that is, we do not know if, after all, a person who produces self-talk is externalising all her thoughts or whether she is keeping some of them to herself. Thus we cannot say that self-talk is actually fully verbalised internal conversation. Another issue is that we cannot be sure about is the function of the mediation process.

This aspect becomes obvious when we consider that, if self-talk comprises the entirety of internal conversation, there is no mediation process whatsoever. However, if the individual keeps some of her thoughts to herself, the mediation process is present, but its function is limited. We cannot, therefore, offer a clear location for self-talk within the relationship of internal and external conversation. What can be suggested however, is that the concepts of internal and external conversation are both involved, whilst at the same time overlapping; the area of overlapping representing the contents of self-talk, as defined in this section, but not being confined to this.



#### 1.4: Discussion.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I have presented and analysed the views of Simmel and Goffman, in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between internal and external conversation (mediation). Both provide central concepts and theoretical elements concerning the development of the relationship between internal and external conversation. Here I will conclude by setting out what will be derived from them and employed in subsequent chapters.

Simmel introduces a distinction between the individual and society and recognises a degree of freedom held internally by each individual. He also suggests that there is interplay between the individual and the society, and recognises that external social forms shape the inner cosmos of the individual, although the inner cosmos of each person then remains partly autonomous. He perceives the relationship between the individual and the society as being a synthesis of the antithetical components of which they consist. The concept of a synthesis between antithetical elements is one of my main arguments about the social and the private aspects of each individual, and is related to Simmel's understanding of conflict and harmony.

On the other hand, Goffman sees the individual as a social actor who can only be studied within society and as a part of it. Goffman's concept of roles leads to a greater realisation of the importance of priorities each individual has in her life; the distance from or attachment to the role can be seen as the different degrees of importance that each priority might have in relation to each individual. One of Goffman's most

important contributions to the present work is his understanding of the balance individuals desire and strive to achieve. Simmel's concept of synthesised antithetical elements and Goffman's perception of the desired balance will constitute the basis of my understanding of mediation. For the purposes of the present study, Goffman's description of the 'go-between' will help to describe the nature of mediation, and his evaluation of self-talk as an externalised form of an internal process offers the possibility of examining situations in which the mediation mechanism might not operate, or operate only in a limited way.

As can be seen, Simmel's and Goffman's views on the individual and the society may not supply a direct or specific analysis of the relationship between internal and external conversation, but they do suggest ways of thinking and concepts which, if they can be analysed in a slightly different way from their original context, may offer guidance in the present study about the core elements of mediation.



## CHAPTER 2

### The Contribution of American Pragmatism.

#### 2: Prolegomena.

My purpose in this chapter is to assess and critique material on American pragmatism, in order to identify the relevance of this specific school of thought to theories on internal and external conversation. This will show how pragmatists perceive the individual and how they connect individuals with the social world, and thus provide a foundation from which to address the central question of my thesis, namely, how does mediation function? I will discuss James's concept of the 'externalisation of the internalised circle'. I will describe the origins of the concept of internal conversation and show how they were developed in Peirce's theory. I will then consider the social sphere by examining the 'transition from internal to external conversation', a transition guided primarily by the work of Dewey and finally, I will consider Mead's analysis of how 'internalisation of external conversation' occurs and his views on social dominance.

#### 2.1: The Externalisation of the Internalised circle.

In 1890, James introduced his theory concerning the self. He argued that 'a man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works [...] and bank account' (James, 1890: 291). Thus, for James, the individual is the total sum of the interaction that she has with the social environment,

including her private property. James develops the analysis of the social and private properties of the self further: the social self represents the recognition which the individual receives from others; the material self is related to the body and its functions; whereas the spiritual self concerns the individual's inner subjective being and psychic faculties (James, 1890: 292). These sub-divisions, together with the pure ego, constitute the empirical self, the 'Me'. James thus perceives the individual as a social agent consisting of social and personal properties and powers. James (1984) proposes that the 'Me' be understood as the 'self as known', or the 'empirical ego', and the 'I' be understood as the 'self as knower', or the 'pure ego'. At any given moment, the 'I' is conscious, whereas the 'Me' is only one of the things of which the individual is conscious. For James, then, the 'I' is a wider concept which includes the 'Me' within it.

James argues that the consciousness of self involves a stream of thought in which the 'I' can both 1) remember those 'I's that went before and know the things they knew, and 2) care paramountly for certain ones among them as 'Me', and assimilate the rest to these. James states that this 'Me' is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known: at each moment, the 'I' is a thought that is different from that of the previous moment, but appropriates the latter, together with all that the 'I' of the previous moment called his own (James, 1890: 400-401). Following on from this, James (1988) perceives the self in two ways: the self-as-knower (the self as subject, the 'I'), and the self-as-known (the self as object, the 'Me'). The Jamesian 'I' is characterised by distinctness and volition, and metaphorically reports on the actions of the 'Me'. The 'I' thus positions the 'Me' retrospectively, and in a way that interprets the movements of the 'Me' within a particular storyline. As Tan and Moghaddam (1995)



suggest, the dynamic character of the self is inherent in the 'fleeting I': as the 'I' positions the 'Me', the 'I' of the previous moment becomes the 'Me' which can then be repositioned by the 'I'.

The fundamental function of the 'I' is thought. The 'Me' constitutes each aspect of the individual, each social property of the self, every distinct element of which the self consists. Control among those elements derives from the 'I' which functions as thought and is therefore able to process every aspect of the 'Me'. What remains to be uncovered is the relationship between the 'Me' and the 'I':

The relation of the transcendental ego to the private ego seems to be that attributes have been more and more transported from the material object side to the material subject side until the latter has become a mere locus (James, 1988: 183-4).

James' basic argument is that each individual has two 'parts'. The first part comprises all the characteristics that make this individual different from any other (James, 1984: 158): this is the inner, private, personal aspects of the individual. The second part consists of the rest of the reality with which the individual interacts: this part is the external, social, public environment with which the individual interacts. James describes an interaction between the transcendental ego (or the material object site or the 'Me') and the private ego (or the material subject site or the 'I') as a 'transportational' procedure. In other words, he describes how the 'Me' transports features or elements or experiences from the external world to the 'I', or the internal world. Although James does not clearly explain what the 'Me' 'carries' to the 'I', the 'Me' is the only component of self (according to James) that could be assumed to have a connection with the external world. Therefore, the elements that the 'Me'

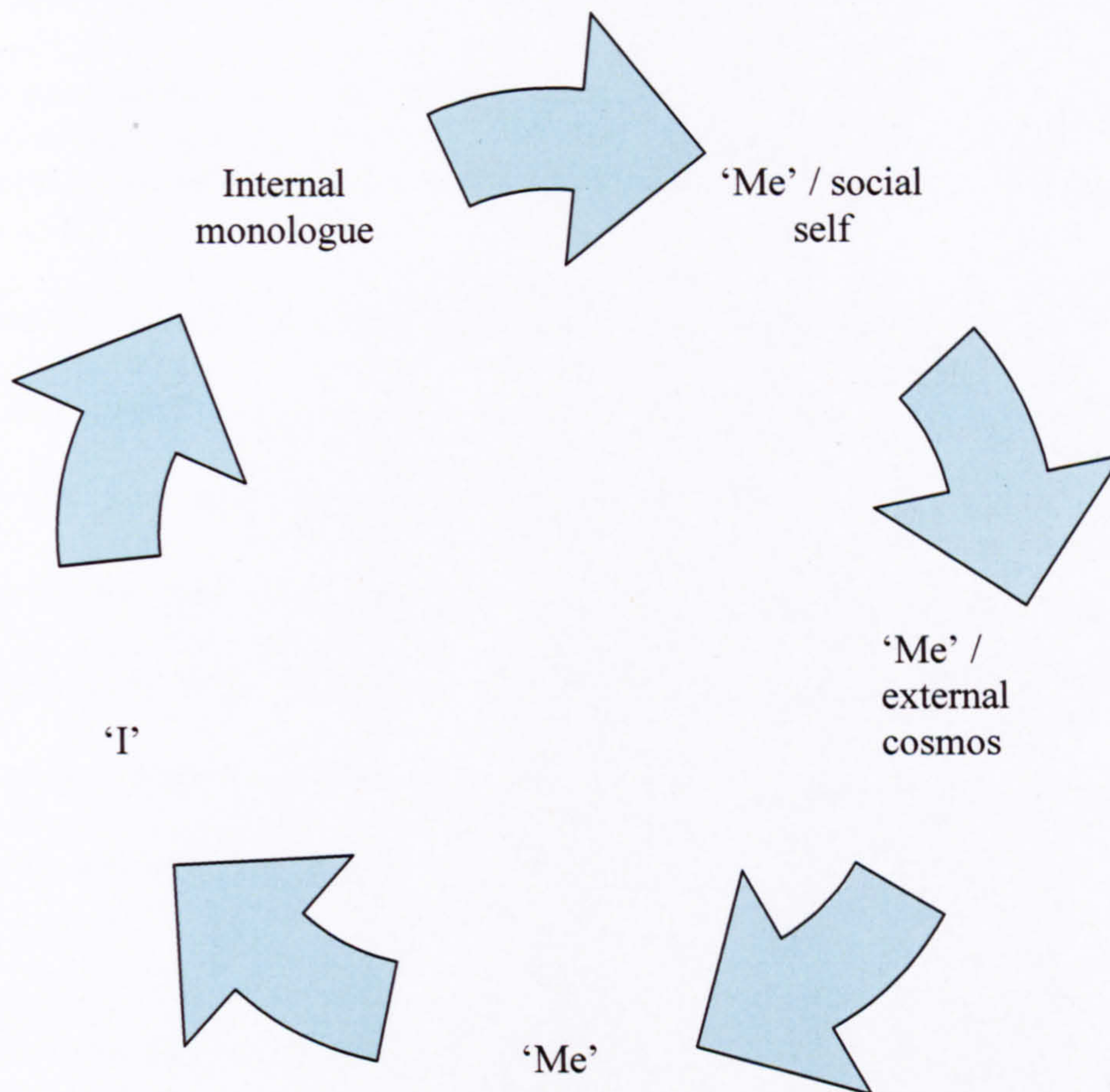
transfers to the 'I' should derive from the external environment and be transferred to the internal. Thus, schematically it could be suggested that,

External cosmos/conversation ↔ 'Me' ↔ transfer attribution ↔ 'I' ↔ Inner cosmos.

With regard to relations between the internal and external world of the individual James makes the following observation: 'the two collections, first of its cohesive, and second of its loose associates, inevitably come to be contrasted. We call the first collection the system of external realities, in the midst of which the room, as 'real', exists; the other we call the stream of our internal thinking, in which, as a 'mental image', it for a moment floats' (James, 1976: 12). James attempts to link the internal cosmos with the external environment of the individual. Whilst the individual is surrounded with external realities, at the same time the individual is occupied with internal thinking. The way these interact with each other could be expressed as follows: the 'I' transfers elements to the 'Me', which serves to interact with other people's 'Me(s)'.

James's thinking on the internal and external cosmos of the individual can be summarised as follows: each individual consists of social and personal elements. All of those elements constitute the 'Me'. The individual's thought, the 'I', has overall control of the 'Me'. Therefore the 'I', the inner cosmos of the individual, consists of social and personal characteristics which are in some way connected. The relationship can be represented diagrammatically:





However, James does not clarify which parts of the self are more important, how they 'co-exist' internally and how/which social elements are internalised, or how/which personal elements are externalised. Thus, although James provides a broad analysis concerning the personal and social elements of the individual's inner cosmos, he does not describe how those separate elements became inner properties of the individual, nor which of the existing inner elements of each person could become 'social selves' towards other individuals, nor how they could do so.

The relationship James defines between the 'Me' and the 'I' is not one in which there is dialogic relationship between these two. Instead of an internal conversation, there is an internal monologue:



The total possible consciousness may be split into parts which coexist but mutually ignore each other, and share the objects of knowledge between them. More remarkable still, they are complementary. Give an object to one of the consciousnesses, and by that fact you remove it from the other or others. [...] what the upper self knows the under self is ignorant of, and *vice versa* (James, 1890: 206).

James describes inner life, or consciousness, and how it operates; but while he clearly realises that consciousness consists of different aspects, he makes no attempt to examine the way they interrelate; in fact, he views the different aspects as independent from each other, as disconnected. Yet, although he offers no explanation of how this might work, he believes that the parts operate in harmony: each part of consciousness operates autonomously, but in some way contributes to a common outcome, for example, language.

For James, then, there is no form of inner dialogic relationship within the individual, and the only way to perceive how consciousness/inner life operates is through an endless monologue. By way of example, let us imagine a woman who is about to have a meeting with a person who works for her, in which she must tell him that she wants to terminate his appointment. If the 'I' is taken to be the entity that controls consciousness, before the woman begins to speak the monologue of the 'I' could take place in a series of disparate thoughts, as follows:

- 'I' thought 1: Remember what you want to tell him.
- 'I' thought 2: Be sensitive in rejecting his views, as he might be hurt.
- 'I' thought 3: Forget the good elements and focus on his negative aspects.
- 'I' thought 4: Here he comes: he seems upset. Somebody has told him!
- 'I' thought 5: Don't look at his eyes; say what you have to say and go.

This schematic may represent James' understanding of the 'I'. In this example, this person's functions operate independently: the 'I' represents the co-ordinator that says what should be said and identifies what should be remembered, forgotten and focused



on etc. Yet, although we can indeed issue internal commands to ourselves this is not the only way that people produce internal conversations. Internal conversations are not restricted to monologues. Indeed the monological form is not a conversation at all. More usually there are questions asked and answers given or two sides of an issue about which to deliberate – in short, a dialogue rather than a monologue.

James' discussion of the 'Me' may, however, be helpful for my definition of mediation, the relationship between internal and external conversation. For James, the 'Me' was seen as the part of the self which makes contact with the external world and transfers elements of it to the inner world of the individual. The 'I' observes and evaluates these elements. Although James does not explain how this occurs, it may be assumed that the externalisation of self is accomplished through the 'Me', as in the case of the internalisation of social elements. Thus, although the 'Me' only transfers thoughts, feelings, memories etc, and no kind of process and evaluation is involved, the 'Me' operates in part as the 'mediator' between internal and external conversation since it is the only aspect of the self which is in contact with both the external and the internal cosmos of the individual. As will be discussed more fully in later chapters, mediation is a mechanism that has many functions other than the transference of elements from the external to the internal world and *vice versa*.

James's work constitutes an initial contribution to the examination of the mediation process: he perceives inner life as having both private and social elements, and it could be suggested that one function of the 'Me' as described by James is to transfer the social elements from the external to the internal world. James distinguishes the inner part of the individual from the rest of her existence, and presents the distinction

between the internal and external cosmos of the individual. My own work, however, will attempt a more focused description of the aspect of the self that remains private and the aspect that remains social.

## 2.2: The Genesis of Internal Conversation.

The genesis of internal conversation can be properly analysed through Peirce's approach. Peirce offered a distinctive view as to how the inner cosmos of the individual operates and how it determines the identity of the person. The following simple diagram summarises the main Peircean views that are relevant to my argument:

Internal Dialogue (Self: I ↔ You) ↔ Individual's Identity ↔ External Conversation

Peirce's concept of the self, is conceived as a first-person world and summarises Peirce's main points concerning the inner world and the home of each person's unique subjectivity. As Wiley (1994) interprets him, Peirce believed that the 'ego' has different semiotic functions: the past ('Me', the 'object'), the present ('I', the 'sign') and the future ('You', the 'interpretant'). Wiley, however, explains that, for Peirce himself, the discussion is not between 'I' and 'Me' (that is, from present to past) but between 'I' and 'You', that is, from present to future.

Peirce does not use these exact terms. He refers to the past 'Me' as the 'critical self' which, he states, is a summation of the past, providing us with an orientation to the future via its deposition in the present. He associates the 'critical self' with the individual's consciousness and observes that the present self or 'I' is seen as a source



of creativity and innovation which exerts intrinsic and extrinsic powers of transformation. The potential future self, or the 'You', moves up the time-line and assumes the position of the acting 'I'. The discussion between the 'I' and the 'Me' starts with the 'I' seeking to persuade the 'routinised' 'Me' that habitual responses should give way to innovative action. An individual's thoughts are what she is 'saying to herself', that is, what she is saying to her *other* self which is just coming to life in the flow of time. Through self-talk, we see how the 'I' prepares the ground for a new transformed 'You' to succeed it (Wiley, 1994).

In contrast to James, Peirce was able to perceive the dialogic form of inner life: he identified the interaction between the three phases of ego, the interrelation between the past, the present and the future<sup>1</sup>. Although Peirce's discussion on the inner dialogue was not extensive, his views on the inner cosmos of the individual are enlightening. He considers introspection (as retrospection) of the internal world, but does not entail direct perception of it *as* internal. Instead he explores the concept of an individual as being able to hear herself rather than viewing herself. Peirce adopts the term 'musement' to refer to careful thought, which lacks only a determinate direction or purpose (such as daydreams, fantasies, ideas). For Peirce, musements are exploratory and help us deal with our fears, ambitions and hopes. Peirce thus understands the inner life as an area in which thought is activated in conjunction with the person's perception of the external world.

This brief introduction to the theorist's view on inner life suggests that, for Peirce, there is a definite distinction between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual,

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<sup>1</sup> Peirce's dialogic relationship between the critical and the present self is what I, following the example of Archer (2003) and Wiley (1994), term 'internal conversation'.

since he refers to internal conditions as a reality distinct from external perception and recognizes the individual's ability to reflect upon herself.

Peirce proposes that all thinking is conducted in signs, which might, but do not have to, have the same general structure as words. Hence he maintains that 'besides words individuals use non-symbolic thought-signs' (Peirce, 1935, V.6: 233-4). These fall into two classes: 'a) icons (pictures or diagrams or other images which are used to replace words) and b) indices (signs more or less analogous to symptoms of which the collateral observations, by which we know what a man is talking about, are examples)'. The icons according to Peirce, 'mainly illustrate the significance of predicate-thoughts, and the indices the denotations of subject-thoughts. The substance of thoughts consists of these ingredients' (Peirce, 1935, V.6: 233-4). Peirce's suggestion that thinking could take place in the form of 'icons' and 'indices', and not only through words, is significant for the investigation of internal conversation, and consequently of mediation. This view offers additional elements to explain what internal conversation comprises of. Thus, Peirce introduces an aspect to the internal conversation (which, as we will see in later chapters, was further elaborated by Wiley), which suggests that the dialogic form of inner life can also entail icons, signs, representations or memories which are not necessarily inscribed in language. Peirce's concept of non-linguistic elements which are used internally by individuals opens the way to approach the process of mediation, giving the researcher the use of more numerous and diverse tools with which to approach mediation (as an inner mechanism which connects internal and external conversation) than only words and language.



Furthermore, it could be argued that individuals who speak more than one language have access to more 'conversational elements/symbols and signs' than an individual who speaks just one language. Each language, structured in different ways (syntax and grammar), also has a different vocabulary and provides different forms of expression. Thus an individual who speaks more than one language has the potential to draw on not only more numerous, but more accurate words to express herself; she has better and faster understanding of elements of the second language, better access to the culture the second language represents, better understanding of the interaction between herself and people who speak different languages<sup>2</sup>.

Peirce (1982, V.1: 499) was interested in the inner being/life of the individual and his understanding of the internal cosmos of the individual offers a view that had not been posited by earlier theorists. He believed that whatever man is, he is at each instant and he explains that the only internal phenomena the man presents are attention, feelings and thought which, according to Peirce, are cognitive in nature. Through this statement he offers two significant points. The first is that whatever the individual consists of, whatever the individual is, she is the same person at all times. The individual thus has a continuous unity with a stable and constant core of being. The second point is that this core derives from internal phenomena, such as feelings-thought-attention. Thus, the source of a person's identity and being derives from her internal existence.

Peirce's views may be summarized as follows: a) the internal life of the individual consists of different elements; b) the individual is a continuous unity/existence with a

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<sup>2</sup> For further discussion on Peirce and the internal /external usage of two languages see: Chalari (2007).

constant core of being at every instant; c) the core of the individual's existence/being is the internal phenomena of which it consists. For Peirce, therefore, the individual is not, as Goffman would have it, a social construction, the outcome of endless interactions with others, but, as Simmel would agree, a unity of itself, and the core of each individual's identity derives from her inner being. This statement is closely connected with the way I perceive mediation, that is, as a personal inner property.

Peirce (1940) distinguishes between the internal world or the world of thought and the external world of fact. He states (1958) that phenomena may be internal or external. Internal phenomena require an internal explanation by necessary internal antecedents (that is, premises), while external phenomena require a physical explanation by physical antecedents. Peirce posits the internal mechanisms used by humans to understand their existence. He introduces the dialogic form of inner life (thus initiating what Archer and Wiley define as internal conversation), which he separates from the external world and external reality although such intrapersonal talk may be about them. The above distinction, and especially his exploration with regard the inner life, constitutes the first clear view pragmatism offered concerning the inner cosmos in relation to the outer cosmos of the individual. It is Colapietro, in fact, in collating Peirce's views on the self, who clarifies Peirce's thinking on the relationship between the inner and the external cosmos of the individual:

When I enter into the inner world, I take with me the booty from my exploits in the outer world, such things as native language, any other languages I might know, a boundless number of visual forms, numerical systems and so on. The more booty I take to that secret hiding place, the more spacious that hiding place becomes. [...] the domain of inwardness is not fixed in its limits; the power and wealth of signs that I borrow from others and create for myself determine the dimensions of my inwardness (Colapietro, 1989: 115-16).



It is important that Peirce himself recognises the internalisation of languages as an additional 'tool' which the individual can use to interact with herself and others. He defines a further inner element, in addition to language, icons and signs: namely, numerical systems, which mathematicians, *inter alia*, may use internally and externally to conduct and describe their thoughts. Thus, following Colapietro, Peirce describes a process of internalization of the external environment, which then forms and shapes the inwardness of the individual. Like Vygotsky and Vocate<sup>3</sup>, he perceives this relationship as the internalization of the external world and *vice versa*. As I will show, mediation is a mechanism which is based on this concept.

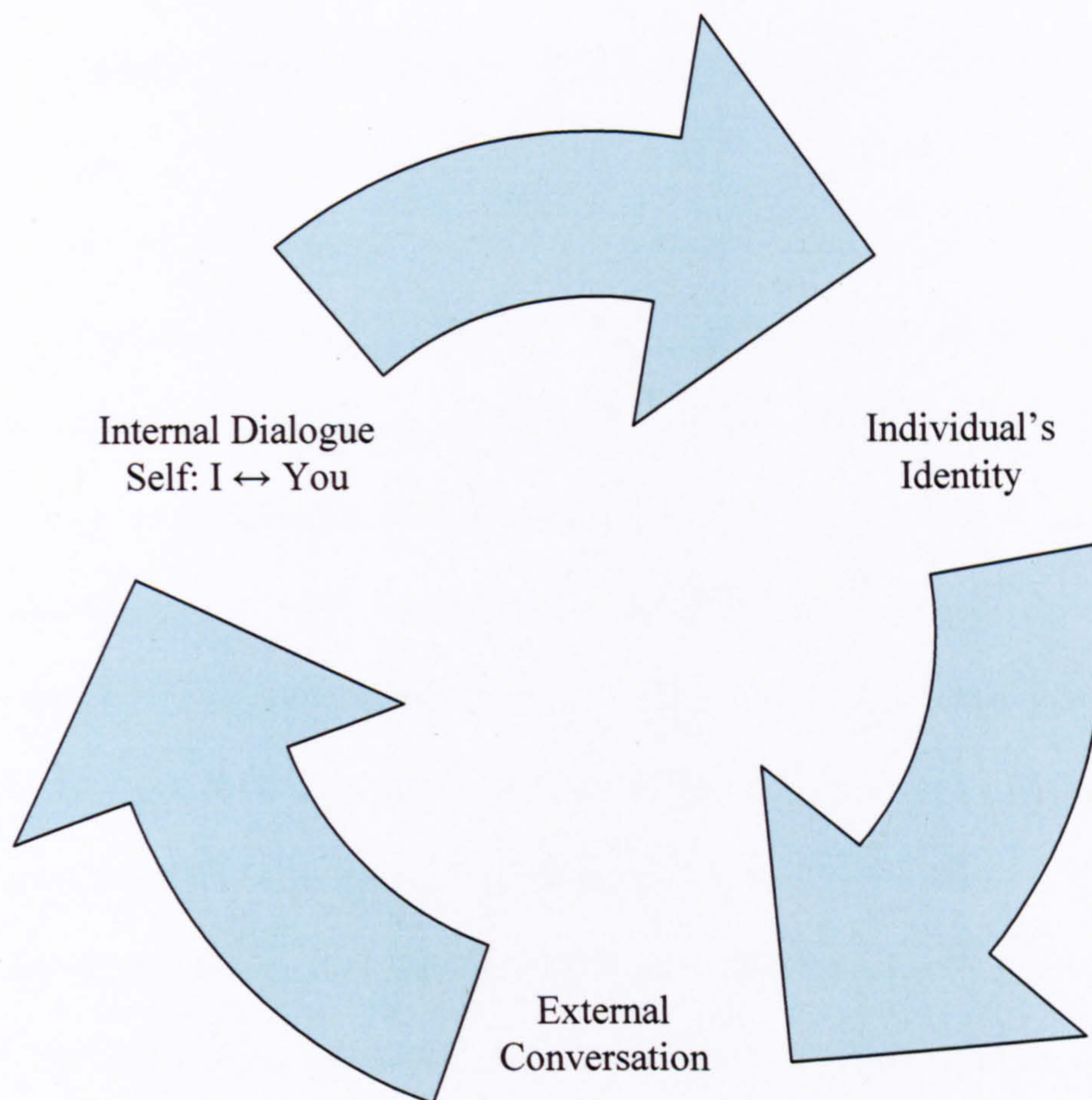
Other features are also involved, but, as Peirce states, some of the inner elements that a person possesses and experiences derive from her ability to internalise her external environment. Peirce plainly recognises the inner freedom of the individual in stating that the person creates her own inwardness. In this way, he makes clear that the inner life of the individual is not a social imposition, but is instead the outcome of the individual's inner freedom to select and ability to create.

Peirce's views might be represented schematically in the following ways:

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3.





To summarise, Peirce demonstrates the importance of the dialogic form of self, and presents the content of the inner world of the individual, consisting of words, icons, indices, feelings, numerical systems, and imaginative creativity. In addition, he recognizes the external world or the world of 'facts'. His theory, although providing little detail about what he sees as the external world, refers both to the internal and external cosmos of the individual. At the same time, he introduces the concept of the dialogic form of the inner cosmos, suggesting new means by which the individual may interact with herself: there are signs, icons, actions and feelings, not just words. Peirce's theory both addresses the idea of internal conversation and offers additional tools for understanding and exploring it. More symbols, which can be represented by an individual's ability to speak a second language, provide the individual with more



ways to interact with and reflect upon herself and to externalize her internal conversation.

What the individual projects as external conversation, external appearance, behaviour, and all other elements that constitute the individual's identity, derive from her inner life which is understood through internal conversation. Internal and external conversation interact with each other and this interplay entails the mediation process that I shall investigate in this study. Peirce's theory suggests that the actual identity of the individual derives from her internal existence, from her internal cosmos and thus from her internal conversation. This argument constitutes a central plank of my thesis and can be summarised by saying that Peirce's theory basically conceptualises the individual as not being derivative of society although necessarily a social being.

### 2.3: The Transition from Internal to External.

The transition from the study of the internal cosmos of the individual to the external is a process that can be followed through Dewey's work. Although Dewey held contradictory views, I suggest that, through the very contradictions in his work, a transition in the investigation from the internal to the external cosmos of the individual can be attempted. The central argument to be proposed and discussed in this section concerns Dewey's contribution, the results of which can be represented as follows:

Internal conversation (freedom of inner life) ↔ External conversation (cultural influence) ↔ Control of Internal Conversation.

What is distinctive in Dewey's writings is how radically he changes his views concerning the importance of the internal and the external to the individual's existence. Dewey (1971) discusses the 'ego' as the source of volition, the cause of any choice. 'Ego' is an internal representation of the self, which, according to Dewey, is always free and acts according to its freedom. Dewey ([1942]1970) follows Kant's views concerning the two realms: one is outer, physical and necessary, and the other inner, ideal and free. Although they are independent, primacy always lies with the inner realm. Initially, Dewey ([1942]1970) supports the notion of a harmonious relation between the freedom of soul and the subordination of action. For Dewey ([1925]1981), 'inner life' represents a feeling, a state of mind or an interesting event which has its own significant career. Inner life thus consists of imagination and emotion, inner reveries and enjoyment. These constitute the freedom of the individual. Outside the individual, everything (study, science, family, industry, government) is constrained. Dewey posits that an individual's road to freedom by escape into the inner life is no modern discovery, but used many times by 'savages', by the oppressed and by children.

However, elsewhere Dewey states the following:

Individuality is at first spontaneous and unshaped; it is a potentiality, a capacity for development. Even so it is a unique manner of acting in and with a world of objects and persons. It is not something complete in itself, like a closet in a house or a secret drawer in a desk, filled with treasures that are waiting to be bestowed on the world. Since individuality is a distinctive way of feeling the impacts of the world and of showing a preferential bias in response to these impacts, it develops into shape and form only through interaction with actual conditions (Dewey, 1931b:156).



In a different part of his work, Dewey (1931a) argues that it is as natural and inevitable for an individual to define himself within close limits as it is for him to test himself in expansive acts that inevitably result in an eventual breaking down of the self. Here Dewey introduces the ultimate dialectic of the universal and the individual, based on his understanding of the ego and the world of things and persons as dualistic. The individual has a private sphere (as has been discussed, 'inner life' is a term also used by Simmel<sup>4</sup>) in which she enjoys personal freedom, while at the same time she communicates with the world. According to Dewey, an individual existence has a dual status and import: an individual belongs to and forms the world, and has her own preferences, satisfactions and requirements. On the other hand, individual people are culturally formed.

The idea of culture [...] points to the conclusion that whatever are the native constituents of human nature, the culture of a period and group is the determining influence in their arrangement; it is that which determines the patterns of behaviour that mark out the activities of any group, family, clan, people, sect, faction, class. It is at least as true that the state of culture determines the order and arrangement of native tendencies as that human nature produces any particular set or system of social phenomena so as to obtain satisfaction for itself (Dewey, 1940: 18-19).

It may be possible to reconcile these apparently contradictory statements by interpreting Dewey as stating that inner life *is* culture: the individual has an internal conversation which is at least partially dominated by external conversation, and in the end, internal and external conversation harmonise. Dewey suggests a basis for this harmonisation in his discussion of culture:

The function of culture in determining what elements of human nature are dominant and their pattern or arrangement in connection with one another goes beyond any special point to which attention is called. It affects the very idea of individuality. The ideal that human nature is inherently and exclusively individual is itself a product of a cultural individualistic movement. The idea that mind and consciousness are intrinsically individual did not even occur to any one for much the greater part of human history. It would have been

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<sup>4</sup> It is not clear whether Pragmatists were aware of Simmel's work.

rejected as the inevitable source of disorder and chaos. [...] With human beings, cultural conditions replace strictly physical ones (Dewey, 1940: 21).

It seems apparent that Dewey radically changes his views about the individual as his ideas develop, perhaps influenced by other pragmatists who believed in the social and cultural dominance over the individual. His later works gradually move away from the idea of the individual having a private part, inner freedom, inner life and independence of consciousness. Eventually, he comes to perceive these as cultural conceptions and the individual as a cultural construction. This is a fundamental shift, and a reader may not be able to determine which view ultimately predominates. It would seem, however, as it is in his last works that this kind of change of thought is expressed, that his views might have altered and his theory have developed from an individual-centred perspective to a cultural/social-centred one.

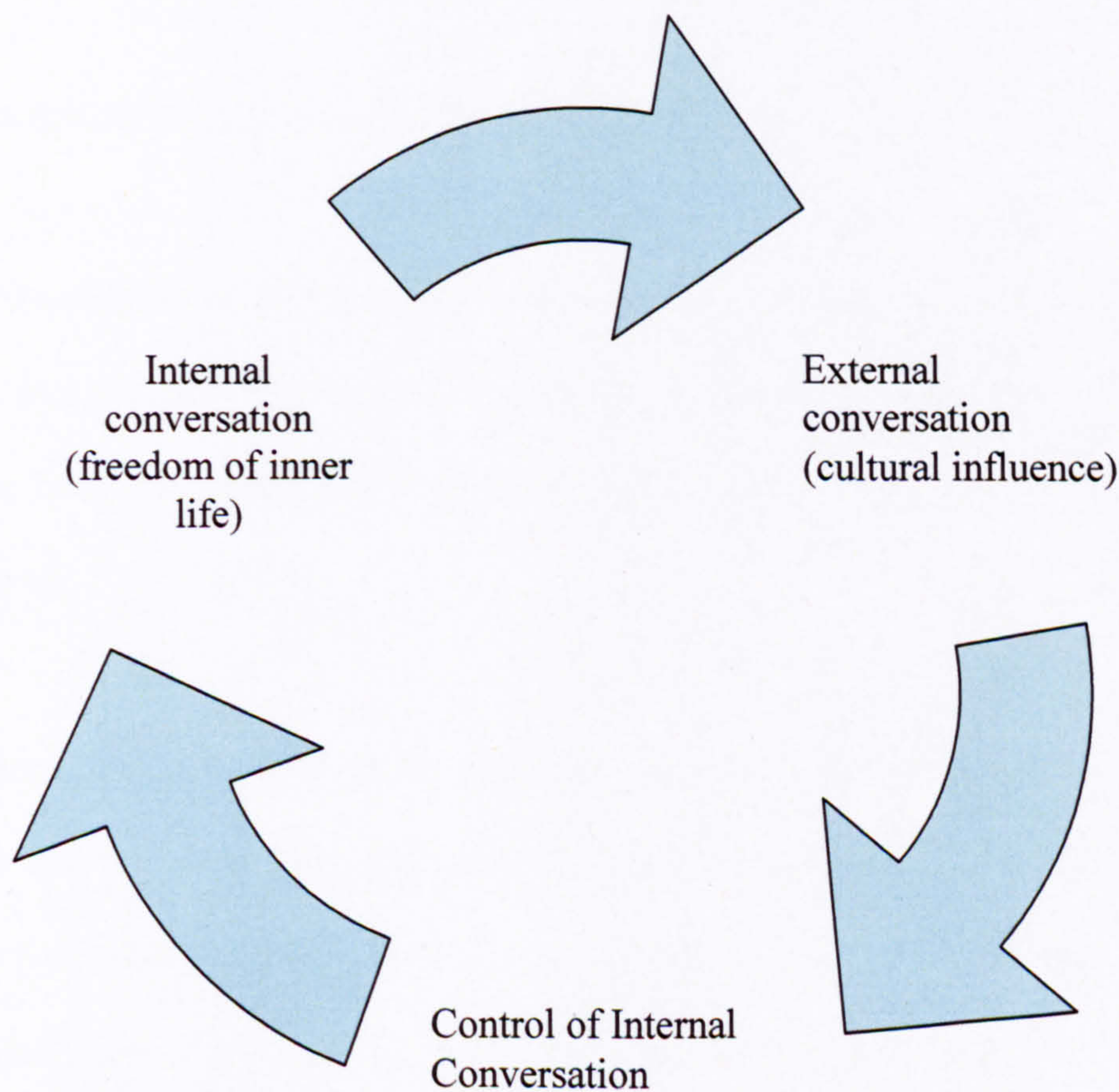
At different stages in his career, Dewey believed in the distinction of an internal and an external cosmos, which stood in a dialectic relationship. He also believed in the inner freedom of the individual and his need to alter internally in order to effect external change. Yet Dewey changes his views and elsewhere recognises the dominance of culture on an individual and how deeply the individual's inner life is influenced by the external environment. For Dewey inner life is no longer in itself an escape from everyday life, as it is for a child talking to an imaginary friend or people fantasising about their ideal holiday. Furthermore, Dewey does not recognise any form of reflexivity within the inner cosmos of the individual that could derive from internal freedom. It could be argued that Dewey's inner freedom is presented, in his earlier work, as a private sphere, providing secure and peaceful hospitality to the individual, rather than as a mechanism for further deliberation and reflection. Yet at



the same time, internal freedom need be seen as nothing more than the individual's control in selecting between the possible futures which are defined by culture.

Dewey began his journey from a recognition of the individual's superiority, continued by realising culture's determinant influence and concluded by demonstrating social dominance over the individual. His theories can be demonstrated in the following ways:

Internal conversation (freedom of inner life) ↔ External conversation (cultural influence) ↔ Control of Internal Conversation.





What is important for my examination of the mediation process, however, is how Dewey reprioritises his analysis from the internal to the external cosmos of the individual. First he displays his ability to see the importance of the individual's internal freedom, and then he transfers his attention to the superiority of culture and society. For my purposes, both these perceptions are important, but they need to be studied in their interplay rather than being treated as a zero-sum relationship. Dewey's corpus of work involuntarily suggests the importance of trying to find the balance between the internal and the external world of the individual rather than try to find which sphere dominates the other. In subsequent chapters therefore, in order to clarify the relationship between internal and external conversation, I will trace each conversation's path in an attempt to identify where they meet<sup>5</sup>.

#### 2.4: The Internalisation of the External Conversation.

The internalisation of the external world is viewed throughout the present study as a process that the individual uses in everyday life in order to explore, understand and evaluate both the social world and herself. It is here that Mead is of particular importance.

Mead attempted to investigate the self by introducing a dialogic relationship between the past and the present self. He proposes three different notions of the self: the 'I', the 'Me' and the 'generalised other'. According to Mead ([1956]1964), when one determines what one's position is in society and feels oneself as having a certain

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<sup>5</sup> See chapter 4.



function and privilege, these are all defined with reference to an 'I'. However, the 'I' cannot be grasped directly by the subject. 'The 'I' of this moment is present in the 'Me' of the next moment. Once again, I cannot turn around quickly enough to catch myself. I become a 'Me' in so far as I remember what 'I' said. The 'I', Mead states, is understood as a historical figure. It is what, a second ago, was the 'I' of the 'Me'' (Mead, [1956]1964: 228-230).

With regards to the social environment, Mead argues that the organised community or social group which gives the individual her very unity of self can be called the 'generalised other', a notion he introduces in the early stages of his work. The attitude of the generalised other is the attitude of the whole community. It is in the form of the generalised other that the social process influences the behaviour of the individuals involved in it and carries it on: that is, the community exercises control over the conduct of its individual members. It is in this form that the social process or community enters as a determining factor in the individual's thinking and articulated speech. Mead also suggests that it is only by adopting the attitude of the generalised other toward oneself that can one think at all, for only in this mode can thinking, or the internalised conversation of gestures which constitutes thinking, occur (Mead, [1956]1964: 218-220). The generalised other represents all the forms that society takes in order to influence, form and shape the individual; it is the skeleton of each person's thought and speech, that is, the skeleton for every individual's internal and external conversation. Unlike Dewey, Mead is very clear in his views on social dominance over the individual, and these views remain stable and consistent throughout his work.

Furthermore, Mead ([1932]1959) states that society gives form and content to the 'I', without which the individual would have no say, nor indeed any control over his conduct as an 'I'. For Mead, the form as well as the content of consciousness has social origins, and therefore it could be argued that speech/language/conversation (internal or external) is a social gift. Although he recognises that the self consists of two interrelated elements, he also believes that the self and the core of each person's existence, the 'I', is formed in early social concourse. Each self might be different, but all selves are formed in different ways from the social environment.

Mead's conception of the generalised other (the attitude of the whole community), and language (the sharing of 'significant symbols'), makes possible, the interaction between individuals; and, at the same time, the possibility of individuals also thinking and interacting internally. This internal process takes place partly through language, in the same way that individuals use it externally; but not exclusively, since (as Peirce has suggested) symbols and signs, and feelings are involved as well. However, these internal processes are guided and influenced by the generalised other; in other words, these processes follow the route 'suggested' by the generalised other although the 'I' is allowed its 'day in court'. Thus, we can see the involvement between the Meadian generalised other and language, and that they are both involved in internal and external conversation. In Mead's view, the generalised other might be said to form external conversation and to shape internal conversation. Language, therefore, constitutes the structure of external conversation and the basis of internal conversation. Referring to the crucial instance of gesture, Mead states that

[...] a symbol which answers to a meaning in the experience of the first individual [...] also calls out that meaning in the second individual. Where the gesture reaches that situation it has become what we call 'language'. It is now



a significant symbol and it signifies a certain meaning (Mead, [1934]1962: 46).

Here, Mead is defining language as the symbols exchanged between interacting parties, but language can be also understood as a tool we can employ to investigate the micro and macro dimensions of the individual. This is an extremely important aspect, and one which I will use in this thesis: Mead's view of the 'generalised other' language, in the form of conversation, can also be used as a representation of the notion itself, in that language, like the 'generalised other', organises society and gives the individual her unity of self. Conversation is used internally and externally by the individual, privately and socially, silently and aloud; thus, as a form, system or structure, conversation is one way that the nature of the relationship between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual can be explored.

For Mead, people have the ability to comment to themselves about their own actions, and when they do this they take on a twofold character. People are both communicators and receivers of communication (Cuzzort and King, 1995: 133). According to Mead's analysis, we cannot say 'mind and then society', but must see society first and then mind arising within that society (Miller, 1982:2). Within Mead's views, the self seems to have two basic processes. The 'I' is the immediate response of an individual to others. It is the incalculable, unpredictable and creative aspect of the self. The individual does not know in advance what the action of the 'I' will be, 'what that response will be he does not know and nobody else knows. Perhaps he will make a brilliant play or an error. The response to that situation as it appears in his immediate experience is uncertain' (Mead, [1934]1962: 175). We know the 'I' only after the act has been carried out, thus we know the 'I' only through our memories. The 'I' reacts against the 'Me', the organised set of others' attitudes which the

individual herself assumes (Mead [1934]1962: 175). For Mead, the 'Me' is the adoption of the generalised other. In contrast to the 'I', an individual is conscious of the 'Me'; the 'Me' involves conscious responsibility, and it is through the 'Me' that society dominates the individual.

As Archer (2003:79) states, the 'Me' for Mead is actually the 'We'. Although Mead mentions an unpredictable aspect of the self, and thus a degree of freedom within the self, this inner freedom is unpredictable in its effects. Mead thus implies that there is an aspect of each person that is not controlled by society; and indeed, most relevant for my thesis, a detailed definition of the Meadian 'I' might have altered the basis of his entire theory in relation to the generalised other; yet he fails to provide a full analysis and what he perceives the 'I' to be remains a mystery.

What does emerge from Mead's approach is the fact that his theory of the self is mainly based on the external world of the individual. According to Scheff (2000), Mead was one of the pragmatists who proposed that inner dialogue makes up the content of consciousness. As mentioned above, Mead believed that society precedes the individual and that our sociality is prior to our self-consciousness: as Archer states, he is a strong externalist, forcefully convinced that most non-impulsive internal psychological events are organised from the outside to the inside (2003: 91-92). To Mead, individual thinking is part of society's conversation although it is also responsible for carrying society forward. Mead does not explicitly recognise the personal freedom of the individual (as Dewey does) and it is not clear how the independent 'I' operates on the conditions under which it can prevail over the 'Me'. Conversely, his approach to the generalised other and how deeply it can influence the

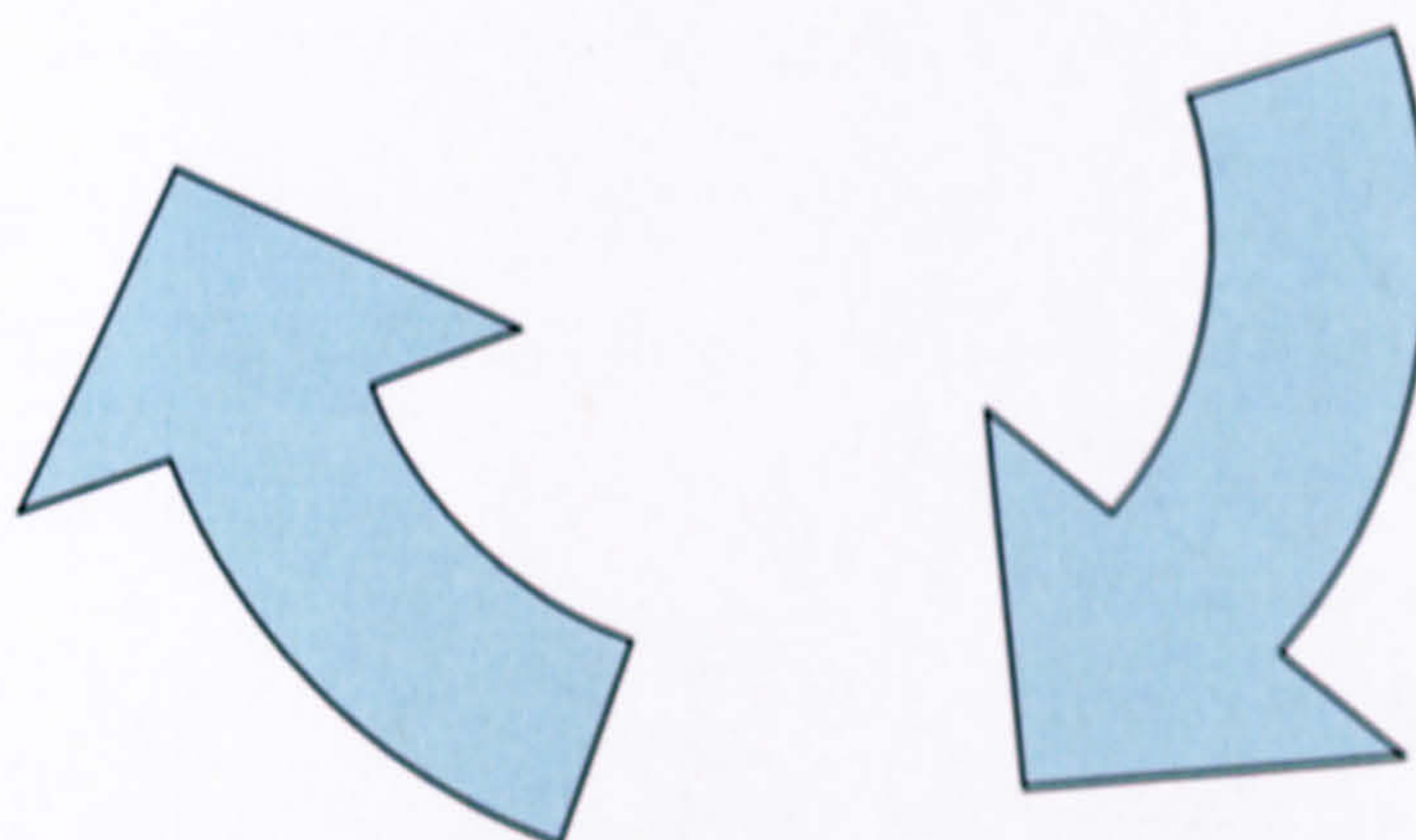


individual is clear and detailed. Mead's theory can be represented in the following ways:

External Conversation → Internal conversation (Self: I/Me/generalised other) →

External conversation

External  
Conversation



Internal  
conversation (Self:  
I/Me=generalised  
other)

Here we can see the internalisation of the external, that is, the external's dominance of the internal. Although my analysis is based on the perception of internal and external conversation as being two interrelated but distinguishable functions, it would be possible, in fact, to follow Mead's approach to mediation as far as the internalisation of external conversation is concerned part of everyday interaction.



## 2.5: Discussion.

So far, I have discussed and critiqued the theories of the four most important representatives of the school of American pragmatism: Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead. Each of these theorists has been shown to contribute disparate thoughts to the discussion on internal and external conversation. I have explored their work in an attempt to discover a way of describing the individual in terms of both her internal and external cosmos, however, that approach is not fully apparent in any of these theorists' work. What has been found are various elements that can be taken from each theorist and synthesised in order to approach my main question: how does mediation function, or, to put it another way, what is the relationship between internal and external conversation.

The views presented so far have in common the pragmatists' conception of the individual and the self. Peirce offers feelings, symbols, and representations as tools to approach the mediation process. Peirce and James were both involved with the internal cosmos of the individual and sought to explore what it consists of. Their theories will be further discussed in the following chapters through the views of recent sociologists (Wiley, Colapietro and Archer) on the self. Through the transition from internal to external conversation Dewey made it clear that, to approach mediation, the researcher should investigate both internal and external conversation with equal interest and follow the different paths each provides. By doing this, we can investigate where internal and external conversation interconnect, whilst analysing the important aspects of each. Finally, the internalisation of external conversation, represents Mead's main contribution to the present work.



All the theories discussed above can be combined in different ways and be used in analysing the relationship between internal and external conversation. It is particularly important to distinguish between the inner and outer lives of the individual, to appreciate the inner dialectic forms of reflection and reflexivity, and to understand how deeply the social world influences the inner life and to what degree the personal freedom of the individual remains as a causal power.

The contribution of social theory and, more specifically, of pragmatism, to the analysis of internal conversation is extensive, yet it is by no means complete. The concept of internal conversation arose in the nineteenth century, but at this time analytical developments were limited. Although the notion of reflexivity was introduced by some pragmatists, its importance was not fully recognised; and whilst some pragmatists sought to link the internal with the external, others chose to stress instead the dominance of the external world. The process of mediation, the relationship between the internal and the external cosmos of the individual, has not been directly addressed by pragmatists and remains to be fully examined.

## CHAPTER 3

### Recent Approaches.

#### 3: Prolegomena.

Having presented in the previous chapter the relevance to this thesis of the work of Simmel, Goffman and American Pragmatists, I shall now examine recent sociological and psychological approaches, as well as exploring the influence pragmatism and traditional social theory have had on recent social theory and research on internal and external conversation. In this chapter, I will first present the contribution of developmental psychology and intrapersonal communication in relation to the understanding of internal and external conversation. I will then discuss the theories of Bourdieu and Giddens as a continuation of Meadian theory, and the work of Wiley, Colapietro and Archer as a continuation of the Peircian school of thought and of James' views.

#### 3.1: The Internal aspects of the Individual.

Interaction between oneself and the social environment has not been comprehensively examined within sociology; since the studies of the early American Pragmatists, the issue has attracted little interest. However, developmental psychology, especially through the work of Vygotsky, has contributed significantly to the understanding of 'inner-speech' and, to some extent, mediation. In addition to Vygotsky's work, new approaches to intrapersonal communication, have also provided valuable elements.



### 3.1.1: Piaget, Vygotsky and the Internal Conversation.

As developmental psychologists, Piaget and Vygotsky were primarily interested in the origins and processes of cognitive development. These psychologists disagree about the role that 'private' or 'egocentric' speech plays in one's cognitive development. According to Piaget (1926), egocentric speech is the speech a child produces without being interested in whether or not she will be understood by others: the child speaks aloud to herself without attempting to communicate with others. Piaget believes that this kind of talk disappears as the self-awareness of the child develops. Conversely, Vygotsky ([1934]1962) does not consider egocentric speech to be an antisocial kind of communication, but rather a vocal attempt to converse with oneself. He believes that this kind of self-talk will eventually be internalised and silent.

In his research, Piaget identifies the following uses of speech: as verbal repetitions of another individual, monologues during an activity, and non-reciprocal remarks made in collective settings. In these instances, individuals' speech is not so much directed towards other individuals as self-directed. To Piaget, these patterns of speech are evidence of egocentrism, a sign of cognitive immaturity and an inability to share the perspective of another individual. However, he argues that, as children grow older, they increasingly socialise with others and their speech becomes communicative, moving from being self-orientated to other-orientated, a sign that they are able to appreciate others' perspectives. A child overcomes egocentrism by beginning to think critically and logically, causing egocentric speech to fade away (Piaget, 1926).

Piaget's views on egocentric speech may be understood in terms of a period of developmental behaviour that the child has to negotiate and that all children are seen to experience. Piaget believes egocentric speech to be both temporary and anomalous, but does not explain which part of it he sees as the anomaly: the fact that the individual talks to herself or the fact that she is doing so aloud. The antisocial aspect concerns the fact that the child prefers to talk to herself rather than anyone else, forcing others to realise that she is ignoring them. Piaget does not discuss whether 'egocentric' speech might silently exist in older age groups. Whichever is the case, Piaget's theory unequivocally states that the dialogical involvement an individual has with herself at a young age can be characterised as 'antisocial'.

However, Piaget is correct in noting the specific age at which this externalisation occurs and the fact that it largely disappears over time. What he does, albeit unintentionally, is to observe the externalisation of internal conversation in its pure form (during childhood) and also that, after a certain point in the individual's development, this conversation 'disappears' or, more accurately, is 'internalised', as Vygotsky puts it. In other words, Piaget realises that 'egocentric speech' is visible and audible at a specific age (and therefore available for research) before it 'disappears' or, more accurately, before the social environment contributes to it becoming 'hidden' and internalised. Piaget thus reveals the exact point at which this transition takes place. However, what is even more important is Vygotsky's interpretation of Piaget's concept of egocentric speech. Vygotsky suggests that egocentric speech is a stage of development preceding inner speech: inner and egocentric speech fulfil intellectual functions; their structures are similar, and egocentric speech disappears at school age



when inner speech begins to develop. Hence, Vygotsky concludes that egocentric speech changes into inner speech.

Vygotsky ([1934]1962) believes that a child's cognitive development originates in socialising activities, then moves through a process of increasing individuality. He argues that self-directed speech does not necessarily demonstrate cognitive immaturity (as Piaget had maintained) but, rather evinces cognitive development. He claims that, for a child, private speech is functionally different from other kinds of speech, and that a child soon begins to differentiate between speech that is directed towards others and speech that is self-directed. As a child grows older, self-directed speech changes into silent inner speech; vocalisation becomes unnecessary because the child 'thinks' the words, instead of voicing them. In short, inner speech still exists and develops within the individual, but the individual does not externalise it.

Vygotsky's definition of inner speech is taken from his book *Thought and Language* ([1934]1962). Inner speech is not the interior aspect of external speech, but functions within itself; in inner speech, words die as they bring forth thought. Vygotsky believes that inner speech is the process of thinking in pure meanings and that it is a dynamic, shifting, unstable thing, fluttering between word and thought (the two more or less stable and firmly deliberated components of thought, according to Vygotsky). Furthermore, he links inner speech with thought by saying that thought itself is the next plane of verbal thought, one still more inward than inner speech. Vygotsky identifies the transition of thought to speech and the transmission from thought to words. As can thus be seen, Vygotsky approached the notion of inner speech and defined it in a way that is close to the notion of internal conversation. He separates

inner from external speech, connects inner speech with language and words and distinguishes inner speech from thought.

In turn, Vygotsky identifies three stages of speech development: 'external' speech, 'egocentric' speech and 'inner' speech. He states that the development of speech parallels the development of other mental operations and introduces the following stages: 1) the 'primitive/natural' stage, which refers to pre-intellectual speech and pre-verbal thought; 2) the 'naïve psychology' stage, which refers to correct use of grammatical forms/structures; 3) the 'egocentric' speech stage in which, for example, the child counts on her fingers; and 4) the 'ingrowth' stage, which refers to the external operation turning inwards (the child counting in her head). This is the final stage of soundless speech.

Having presented how Vygotsky perceived inner speech, we can now link his views to the mediation mechanism I examine in this study. As I will discuss in later chapters, the mediation mechanism, that is, the relationship between internal and external conversation, constitutes the link between the inner and outer cosmos of the individual. However, it has to be underlined that, contrary to Vygotsky's approach, mediation is not studied or analysed from a developmental point of view.

Vygotsky states 'that inner speech is speech for oneself, whereas external speech is speech for others', and he adds that 'absence of vocalisation is only a consequence of the specific nature of inner speech, which is neither an antecedent of external speech nor its reproduction' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 143). For Vygotsky, inner speech is, in a sense, the opposite of external speech, the turning of thought into words, its



materialisation and objectification. Vygotsky claims that the process is reversed with inner speech: speech turns into inward thought (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 143). He views inner speech as the internalisation of the external world, in other words the capacity the individual has to ruminate upon herself and the outside world. Vygotsky offers an understanding of internal conversation that American Pragmatism fails to identify: inner speech is a separate function from external speech and constitutes the internalisation of the external environment and, in consequence, the individual's interactions with others. In my interpretation, this internalisation involves critical evaluation of and rumination upon the individual's relationship with herself and others.

One of the main functions of mediation, to be fully discussed later, is the process of internalising external conversation. Mediation is a mechanism that consists of various functions and processes, and Vygotsky's views on inner speech provide the clearest possible account of the fundamental role of mediation; it is the mechanism which underlies the internalisation of the external world and the externalisation of the individual's inner world<sup>1</sup>. Significantly for Vygotsky both hinge upon the fact that 'inner speech is something new that brought in from the outside along with socialisation' ([1934]1962: 136).

Vygotsky is the first theorist to adopt a clear position regarding the relationship between internal and external conversation: internal conversation constitutes the internalisation of external conversation. This does not in any way imply that internal conversation is merely the repetition of external conversation. It is crucial to realise

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<sup>1</sup> Further analysis of these terms will follow in the next chapter.

that, as a developmental psychologist, Vygotsky is proposing that the individual starts to create her inner life by internalising the external environment and not *vice versa*. However, it is important to note that on the very last page of *Thought and Language* he suggests that ‘thought is born through words’, and then, with equivocation, states that ‘the word is not the beginning – action was there first’ ([1934]1962: 153). The latter sentence opens the door to non-language based interactions with the environment and thus equivocally enlarges the potential scope of inner speech to referents outside and beyond the social order, e.g. ones pertaining to the natural and practical orders. On that basis I will challenge his predominantly ‘social’ approach although his contribution to ‘internalisation’ as part of the mediation process is central to my thesis and further discussion of this concept will follow in the next chapter.

### 3.1.2: Intrapersonal Communication.

This is a branch of social science that is involved with conversation *per se* and is deeply influenced by psychology. It can be seen as studying external conversation, but attempts have also been made to establish where intrapersonal communication derives from. As this section will demonstrate, such attempts are strongly related to Vygotsky’s understanding of inner speech.

According to Dance and Larson (1972), speech communication studies forms of spoken symbolic interaction as well as the individual’s self-actualisation. Studies of speech communication basically concentrate on external rather than internal conversation. Some of the central issues are: stimulus, information, speech, sign, symbol, language (verbal, nonverbal, vocal and non-vocal). As these elements refer



mainly to external communication, I will not analyse them further. However, speech communication also explores a phenomenon known as 'intrapersonal communication', described by Dance and Larson as the 'creation, functioning and evaluation of symbolic processes which operate primarily within oneself. Activities such as 'thinking', 'mediating' and 'reflecting' which may require no environmental storage outside the life space of the communicator, are on the one end of intrapersonal communication as a continuous process, and activities such as talking aloud to oneself and writing oneself a note are on the other end of this continuum' (Dance and Larson, 1972: 123).

The notion of intrapersonal communication was extended in 1994 by Vocate, who suggested that intrapersonal communication arises from the dialectic of brain and culture that produces a synthesis of mind unique to each individual. Vocate makes a distinction between two different kinds of intrapersonal communication: 1) self-talk, or the dialogue within oneself which may be internal or external, and 2) inner speech, which refers to a process of coding thought into language or decoding perceived language into meaning. Thus, it can be seen that Vocate promotes the dialectic form of internal conversation, which, as she states, can also be externalised and yet still remain 'self-talk'. For Vocate, then, an internal conversation can be externalised as such, and then become an 'audible internal conversation', that is, audible self-talk. It must be noted, however, that this kind of talk is quite rare. One type of it is what Piaget describes as 'egocentric speech', which is observed in childhood. Another instance is what Goffman calls 'self-talk' (Goffman, 1981: 80), for example when someone makes an embarrassing mistake and speaks aloud to herself, saying 'Silly

me' etc. People in pathological conditions may talk to themselves endlessly in an audible manner.

It is not clear, however, precisely what Vocate means when she refers to self-talk. If what she refers to is the reflexive dialogical form that internal conversations manifests internally, then it is extremely rare to hear a person producing such as externalised internal conversation. Vocate also implies that intrapersonal communication can be understood as the internalisation of external conversation or the externalisation of internal conversation. Both points are central to my thesis and describe aspects of mediation process.

Following Vygotsky's conception which perceives inner speech as the internalisation of the external environment, Vocate very importantly stresses the externalisation of internal conversation: Intrapersonal communication represents a well-founded attempt to combine existing theories regarding inner conversation. However, Vocate suggests a wider understanding of the individual's need to interact internally with herself. She also argues that it is the interaction within the self that prevents one's personality from being a compliant recording of input from one's social environment or culture (1994: 8). It is apparent that she gives 'interaction with the self' a central role in the understanding of the individual and she states that self-talk is the main linkage between the individual and his or her environment. Vocate thus views intrapersonal communication as the ability of the individual to interact both with the social environment and with herself.



Pre-existing perspectives on inner talk in psychology supply a very important dimension (externalisation) which forms a central concept in the present study. I will discuss the process of decoding (internalisation of external conversation) and encoding (externalisation of internal conversation) in later chapters and suggest that these processes constitute part of the mediation mechanism<sup>2</sup>.

It could be argued that such studies conceive of intrapersonal communication as mediating between the internal and the external cosmos of the individual, which is recognised as a process that uses language (*inter alia*). It would seem that the studies examined above are deeply influenced by American Pragmatism, and especially by Mead and Peirce. However, Vocate gives particular significance to Vygotsky's term 'inner speech' as she tries to describe how the individual develops intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication is an interesting perspective that focuses on speech communication in order to address the ongoing debate concerning the relationship between individual and society. Although I shall not be using the terminology that has been introduced here, or its distinctions (self-talk, inner speech, intrapersonal communication etc), it is apparent that intrapersonal communication has elements in common with internal conversation. Intrapersonal communication is not involved with how the message that is decoded or encoded is evaluated by each individual, but studies on the subject suggest the existence of an internal process that mediates between internal and external communication. Furthermore, these studies underline the importance of language, which is perceived as the means by which this mediation process operates. Therefore, although this psychological research on

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<sup>2</sup> I am not concerned here with investigating internal conversation in instances of verbal externalisation, so will not analyse Vocate's audible aspect of intrapersonal communication.

intrapersonal communication is not fully developed, it gives a sense of moving in the right direction.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the discipline of communication studies has some relevance for the study of the dialogical means by which the individual is connected with society. However, since it derives from psychology, no reference is made to social theory. This suggests that research on intrapersonal communication needs to be extended further to examine the interplay between the personal and social aspects of the individual.

### 3.2: The External aspects of the Individual.

Whilst examining the 'internal' aspects of the individual tends to be the preserve of developmental psychology and intrapersonal communication, current social theory is much more interested in investigating the individual subject by focusing on her 'external' rather than her 'internal' aspects. Bourdieu and Giddens are two recent and very influential sociologists who have been involved in the examination of the individual; they adopted *inter alia* the term 'reflexivity', which is a central concept in most discussions of internal conversation. The following section will both present Bourdieu's and Giddens' relevant theories and demonstrate why their understandings of reflexivity are not compatible with my attempt to investigate the relationship between internal conversation (the inner private dialogues individuals have with themselves about themselves and the social world) and external conversation (the part of internal conversation which becomes externalised).



### 3.2.1: Habitus and Field.

Pierre Bourdieu's main aim was to overcome the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism. A central notion in his theory is 'practice', which he viewed as the outcome of the dialectic relationship between 'fields' and 'habitus'. He believed that practices are neither objectively determined, nor are they the product of free will (Bourdieu, 1977). Bourdieu suggests that the perception and construction that take place in the social world are both animated and constrained by social positions in certain 'fields' – cultural social and symbolic – which are associated with the appropriate dispositions of their incumbents. (Bourdieu, 1990). Bourdieu attempts to transcend objectivism and subjectivism through the interpretation of habitus and field.

According to Bourdieu, a habitus is a mental or cognitive structure through which people deal with the social world. Through socialization, individuals incorporate and internalise schemes by means of which they understand, perceive and evaluate the social world. A habitus is 'the product of the internalisation of the structures' (Bourdieu, 1989: 18). It reflects objective divisions in the social structure, such as age group, gender and class. Not all people have the same habitus, but those who occupy the same position within the social world tend to have a similar habitus (Bourdieu, [1980]1990). Bourdieu described habitus as 'the dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality' (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). He also suggests that it is practice that mediate between habitus and the real world. On the one hand, it is through practice that the habitus is created; on the other, it is as a result of practice that the social world is created. Myles (1999) observes that, according to Bourdieu, while habitus is an internalised structure that constrains thought and choice

of action, it does not determine them. Bourdieu explains that habitus merely 'suggests' what people should think and what they should choose to do, but he adds that 'people are not fools' (Bourdieu, [1980]1990). However people are not entirely rational either: they act in a 'reasonable' manner, they have practical sense. Bourdieu believes that there is a logic to what people do, the 'logic of practice' (Bourdieu, [1980]1990). Habitus functions 'below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny and control by the will' (Bourdieu, 1984a: 466).

In Bourdieu's description, habitus shares certain features with what I define as mediation (i.e. the process governing the relationship between internal and external conversation). This is evidenced (although lacking the dimension of the conversational process) through Bourdieu's statement that habitus 'is the dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of internality' (Bourdieu, 1977: 72). As previously stated, mediation's main task is to regulate the internalisation of the external world and the externalisation of the internal. Bourdieu presents habitus as operating in the same way as mediation. Habitus, therefore, might be seen as coinciding with mediation, but this is far from being the case. Habitus differs fundamentally from mediation in that habitus is a dispositional orientation which the individual does not choose to adopt and is not free to change. Mediation is different from this: it is the 'filter' that each individual deploys when interacting with her social environment and with herself. Each individual has a different 'filter', a unique way of internalising her external world and externalising her internal world. Mediation is thus a mechanism unique to each person and derives from each subject's



personal concerns<sup>3</sup>. In short, for Bourdieu, habitus is the 'filter' society places between the individual and the social world; mediation, conversely, is the 'filter' the individual places between society and herself.

According to Bourdieu, habitus describes 'norms', 'directions', 'logics', 'ways of thinking' which are social in origin whilst they simultaneously 'guide' 'consult' and 'suggest' how individuals should think and act. Bourdieu argues that people constitute structures according to which society is formed and at the same time those structures 'direct' people's minds and thoughts so as to result in social reproduction. Although Bourdieu does not use the terms 'internal conversation'<sup>4</sup> and 'external conversation'<sup>5</sup>, or discuss their referents we can examine his approach to those issues in light of his views on the internal and the external cosmos of the individual.

Bourdieu regards people (that is, groups of people, not each individual separately) and their actions (which, according to my thesis, belong to external conversation and environment) as being initially responsible for habitus, and habitus as being responsible for the subsequent actions of the people. By drawing a parallel between habitus and the function of internal conversation, we can identify some similarities, but a greater number of apparent differences. I argue in this work that internal conversation is responsible for external conversation and that the relationship between them constitutes a mediation process consisting of both private and social characteristics. In other words the person possesses properties and powers which cannot be upwardly relevant to the very different properties and powers of the social.

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed discussion of the precise nature of mediation will occur in later chapters.

<sup>4</sup> That is, the dialogic interplay an individual has with herself about herself and the social environment Archer (2003: 64).

<sup>5</sup> The part of internal conversation the individual chooses to share with her external/social environment.

If we were to view internal and external conversation from Bourdieu's theoretical perspective, external conversation would form internal conversation which structures external conversation which forms internal conversation, and so on. As Mouzelis observes, 'Bourdieu's notion of the habitus and his theory of practice generally, given that it is based on the idea of transcending the objectivist-subjectivist divide, underemphasizes the rational calculative and reflective aspects of human action' (2004: 7). I concur with Archer's evaluation of Bourdieu's contribution to internal and external conversation:

[...] the 'semi-unconscious' operation of the habitus, held to work as 'second nature', dispenses with the need for deliberation and its embodiment prevents subjects from explaining their doings, even to themselves (Archer, 2007: 44).

According to Bourdieu, the term 'field' refers to a network of relations between the objective positions within it<sup>6</sup>. These relations exist irrespective of individual consciousness and will, and are not interactions or intersubjective ties between individuals (Bourdieu, 1992). There are various semi-autonomous fields in the social world (for example, art, religion, higher education), all with their own specific logics and all generating among actors a belief about the things that are at stake in a field (Bourdieu, [1969]1990). Bourdieu maintains that occupants of positions within a field employ a variety of strategies and that the habitus does not negate the possibility of strategic action on the part of agents (Bourdieu, 1993), but he fails to address how such strategic action can be conceived of or planned. Bourdieu attempts to explain the relationship between the field and the habitus by saying that, on the one hand, the field conditions the habitus, and, on the other, that the habitus constitutes the field as

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<sup>6</sup> Gorski (2006) has attempted to adopt the theory of Bourdieu's fields in order to construct a new research method in Historic Analysis.



something that is meaningful, has sense and value and is worth the investment of energy.

Bourdieu, however, believes that field and habitus define one another:

The dispositions constituting the cultivated habitus are only formed, only function and are only valid in a field, in the relationship with the field [...] which is itself a 'field of possible forces', a dynamic situation in which forces are only manifested in their relationship with certain dispositions. This is why the same practices may receive opposite meanings and values in different fields, in different configurations, or in opposing sectors of the same field (Bourdieu, 1984a:94).

Bourdieu then summarises his view as follows: 'there is a strong correlation between social positions and dispositions of the agents who occupy them' (1984a: 110).

Bourdieu's field is a description of institutions, organisations, units etc that occur within any society and that are simultaneously based on habitus and influence it. However, because of their very mutual constitution, the interplay between them cannot be examined. Instead Bourdieu offers another approach that supports society's dominance over the individual.

It must be noted that Bourdieu became increasingly interested in the notion of reflexivity in his later works. However, what Bourdieu defines as reflexivity is something quite different from what I (following Archer, as quoted above) conceive of as the individual's ability to be reflexive. Bourdieu's interest is in reflexive sociology, rather than reflexive persons, and he states that 'reflexivity refers to the need continually to turn the instrument of social science back upon the sociologist', adding that 'every position that sociology formulates can and must apply to the subject who produces it' (Bourdieu, [1982]1991: 8). Bourdieu was initially interested in reflexivity in a context related to sociological research. He understands reflexivity to be the 'ability' sociological practitioners have to relate themselves to the research

process. This conception of reflexivity is of no significance in my work, which is not concerned with philosophical methodology. Although Bourdieu studies reflexivity as a characteristic of the community of sociologists, he does not perceive it as the ability individuals have to be reflexive in their lives. Instead, he indirectly states that he has no intention of relating reflexivity to the individual's inner life:

Bourdieu's brand of reflexivity, namely the inclusion of a theory of intellectual practice as an internal component and necessary condition of a critical theory of society, differs from others in three crucial ways: first, its primary target is not the individual analyst but the social and intellectual unconscious embedded in analytic tools and operations; second, it must be a collective enterprise rather than the burden of the lone academic; and third, it seeks not to assault but to buttress the epistemological security of sociology (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 36).

This extract represents one of the few points in Bourdieu's work at which reflexivity is somehow related to the individual subject. He clearly states here that reflexivity does not refer to a personal, private property, but rather to 'the social and intellectual unconscious'. Although he does not clarify what he means by this phrase, it can be seen that he views reflexivity as a collective, social process involving all practitioners of a particular discipline. For Bourdieu, then, reflexivity is a sociological characteristic or tool, the characterisation of one aspect of sociology, and has nothing to do with the individual's inner ability to be reflexive, to produce internal conversation and to interact deliberately with herself and the social environment. In fact, for Bourdieu, reflexivity does not involve any reflection of subject on object, but rather 'the systematic exploration of the unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought' (Bourdieu, [1982]1991: 10). Through this statement Bourdieu 'understands the relationship between the conscious self and the unthought categories as a hermeneutic relationship, in which the unthought categories are not causes but are to be hermeneutically interpreted, in which the unthought categories are ontological foundations of practical



consciousness' (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994: 154) Here, it becomes apparent that for Bourdieu, reflexivity is the exploration of categories of thought, i.e., of forms, structures and the like, meaning that reflexivity has no connection whatsoever with the individual's inner processes of reflecting upon herself in relation to her society and *vice versa*.

Bourdieu's habitus is an attempt to approach the relationship between structure and agency by transcending this distinction and, in consequence, he looks only at the impact society has on the individual and does not examine the individual's importance within this relationship. In short, his approach was particularly unilateral. Bourdieu's attempt to explain personal dispositions solely through norms, social structures and universal ways of thinking has, as a result, excluded the importance of the individual's inner cosmos from his theory and significantly denied any consequence to personal properties and powers.

### 3.2.2: Structuration Theory.

The conceptual core of Giddens' structuration theory lies in ideas of structure, system and duality of structure. Here, structure means 'the structuring properties (rules and resources), the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them systemic form' (Giddens, 1984: 17); elsewhere he notes that 'structure exists in and through the activities of human agents' (Giddens, 1979: 256). The concept of structuration is premised on the idea that

[t]he constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality [...] the structural

properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise. The moment of the production of action is also one of reproduction in the context of the day-to-day enactment of social life (Giddens, 1984: 25-6).

It can be seen that the nature of the relationship between structure and agency is described here mainly through structure. For Giddens, every research investigation within the social sciences is involved in relating action to structure: 'There is no sense in which structure 'determines' action or *vice versa*' (Giddens, 1984: 219). He also states that action may be synonymous with agency and argues that we must begin a study of the social with the study of recurrent social practices because their basic domain, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the existence of any form of social totality, 'but social practices ordered across time and space' (Giddens, 1984: 2). Thus, according to Giddens, all social action involves structure, and all structure involves social action. Agency and structure are completely interwoven in ongoing human activity or practice and he suggests that 'activities are not brought into being by social actors but are continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents produce the conditions that make these activities possible' (Giddens, 1984: 2).

Yet, for Giddens, 'transformative capacity is harnessed to actors' (Giddens, 1979: 93) and 'change, or its potentiality, is thus inherent in all moments of social reproduction' (Giddens, 1979: 114). Giddens here proposes that individual agents have the capacity to transform themselves and their social structures. What he never explains is how the transformative capacity is exercised. While Giddens produces an elaborate theory concerning structure and its interdependence with action, he leaves open questions about the individual's degrees of freedom and each agent's possible uniqueness.



Giddens's structuration theory has received much attention from various established academics<sup>7</sup>; here, I shall offer my own views of his theory. Action is the selective externalisation of some part of the inner cosmos of the individual. Structure constitutes the constraints and enablements that impinge upon people, depending on what they consider doing.

However, on the part of each speaker, external conversation is the selective externalisation of internal conversation. According to this view, action and structure organise each other and ultimately depend upon the same source, namely the internal conversation of the individual, even if only as unintended consequence. Like Bourdieu, Giddens pays much attention to action, but neither theorist explains where particular actions derive from. Giddens suggests that action may be synonymous with agency. This may be tenable, in the sense that action derives from internal conversation which constitutes the private aspect of the person. However, action is not identified with the inner life of individuals. Since expressed/visible action belongs to the sphere of the external world, it must interact with the structure that forms this environment<sup>8</sup>. Actions cannot (and the individual can choose not to) represent and express every part of the inner life of the individual or agent. Therefore, action may be said to represent a part of the agent rather than the agent herself.

Goffman (1961) pays a good deal of attention to the forms of action an individual might perform. He believes that, in observing an individual's actions, we actually

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<sup>7</sup> See Archer (1982), Craib (1992) and Mestrovic (1998).

<sup>8</sup> Apparently, action may take a silent form, such inner crying or laughing etc, but it must be noted that silent forms of action derive from inner sources and thus even these actions cannot represent every part of the individual. My main discussion here, however, is concerned only with visible forms of action.

observe an actor executing specific social instructions. Thus we can understand, through action and the individual's presentation of herself to others, how society creates 'scenarios' according to which the individual acts/performs. The individual is 'free' to decide whether or not to perform the roles at all or whether or not to perform them in a 'convincing' way. In my view, Giddens is not implying anything different from this since, for him, social action involves structure: the acting subject necessarily draws upon existing structures or 'scenarios' precisely in order to act.

Thus, for both Goffman and Giddens, individuals are simply and solely social actors, and action is synonymous with the agent in the same way as a 'movie role' is synonymous with the 'actor', involving selection and interpretation on the part of the actors who are nevertheless constrained by the 'movie role'. Some selections are not even possible for some actors (an old man playing a young girl) and not every interpretation is compatible with the script. The point is that Giddens, Bourdieu and Goffman do not accord sufficient personal properties and powers to subjects to account for how and why it is that they become *different* social subjects who contribute something of themselves (in their personal uniqueness) to the selection and execution of their social roles.

Giddens, Bourdieu and Goffman are correct in implying that human action is framed by specific structures. Individuals have to act broadly but in specific ways in order for their action to be acceptable to the normativity of the social. In my view, however, this is the exact point at which the whole investigation of action should start, not where it should conclude. As I have already suggested, action derives from the inner cosmos of the individual and is expressed in a way both decided upon and formed by



the individual. As I will discuss later, it is up to the individual's reflexive mechanisms, internal conversation, deliberations and, consequently, mediation to decide which part of any social action will be undertaken and how it will be expressed: in what way, for what reason, for how long etc. Action may show us how society influences, and in some ways controls, the individual<sup>9</sup>, but, in many more ways, action follows internal promptings. Moreover, the actions of an individual do not indicate the importance to each person of her participation in every aspect of her social life. This participation, often entails the individual's deliberative action, which is derived from the inner cosmos of the individual, is formed internally, filtered through the individual and externalised through the individual's will. Action is thus synonymous with the agent, but should be understood as the tip of the iceberg, in that the individual's external conversation alone can be directly observed. However, it must be emphasised that we cannot discern the individual's intentions through action itself or understand what is 'hidden' behind those actions. What I am suggesting here is that we need to depart from the idea of 'action' as part of external conversation in order to explore what the 'hidden' internal conversation/deliberation may be, rather than how action is formed only through society.

Giddens, like Bourdieu, addresses the phenomenon of reflexivity, but in terms that are not directly relevant to my understanding of reflexivity. As mentioned above, reflexivity here is considered to be an inner process which describes the interaction any individual has set herself and the external world. However, Giddens, like Bourdieu, uses the term in a different way from this: for Giddens, reflexivity is to 'direct feedback from knowledge to action' he states that 'reflexivity should be

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<sup>9</sup> For example, in some societies/religions, individuals must dress in specific ways, women must obey their husbands without question, children need to work to survive, etc.

understood not merely as ‘self-consciousness’ but as the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life’ (Giddens, 1984: 3), and he adds that ‘reflexivity is grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display. The reflexive monitoring of action depends upon rationalisation, understood here as a process rather than a state and as inherently involved in the competence of agents’ (Giddens, 1984: 3). Giddens does not describe or explain his understanding of reflexivity. He perceives it as the process of continuous monitoring of action which is based on rationalisation, and states that it constitutes an ability possessed by every normal human. Giddens refers specifically to the ‘monitoring’ of action and not to any other internal reflexive processes: self-questioning, self-determination and most other internal processes to which the ‘self’ prefix can be attached. Therefore, if an individual produces internal conversation which is not expressed externally – even though it may be acted upon - this internal process has no connection with what Giddens calls reflexivity.

My research investigates an unknown territory within sociology, namely the process of mediation. As will be discussed, mediation is strongly related to reflexivity, as Archer defines the term: “‘reflexivity’ is the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and *vice versa*’ (Archer, 2007: 4). Thus far, Giddens’ ‘reflexivity’, which is concerned only with action and ignores nearly all inner sources of action, begs more questions than answers, and cannot aid my attempt to address the inner life of persons and reveal the mechanism of mediation.



In 1994 Beck *et al* proposed a further conception of reflexivity, in which it is held to depend upon the nature of social structure and changes within it (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994: 154)<sup>10</sup>. Here, self-reflection is strongly related to modernisation and the increase of knowledge and scientisation. Furthermore, they distinguish reflexivity from reflection by saying that reflexivity pertains to the undesired transition from industrial to risk society (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994)<sup>11</sup>. Beck *et al* try to use the notion of reflexivity at a macro-sociological level, although they later retract this:

[T]he concept of 'reflexive modernisation' [...] does not imply (as the adjective 'reflexive' might suggest) *reflection* but (first) *self-confrontation*[...] This type of confrontation of the bases of modernization should be clearly distinguished from the increase of knowledge and scientization in the sense of self-reflection on modernisation. Let us call the autonomous, undesired and unseen, transition form from industrial to risk society *reflexivity* (to differentiate it from and contrast it with *reflection*). Then, 'reflexive modernisation' means self-confrontation with the effects of 'risk society' that cannot be dealt with the assimilated in the system of industrial society (Beck *et al*, 1994 :6).

According to my understanding of reflexivity, following Archer's definition, there is indeed a connection between these elements, but this connection does not define reflexivity. The ability each individual has to make reflexive deliberations and is prompted to engage in internal conversations is certainly related to structures, rules, knowledge and modernisation. Reflexivity, however, is much more than that. It is related to structures and rules but it is not necessarily controlled by them. Internal conversation (through which self and social reflection is conducted) is developed by individual subjects in the light of their personal consensus.

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<sup>10</sup> For further discussion on the history and notion of reflexivity, see Wiley (1994), 74-103.

<sup>11</sup> According to Beck *et al* (1994) the concept of risk society designates a stage of modernity in which the threats produced so far on the path of industrial society begin to predominate.

Late Modernity is a period which includes elements that help the development of reflexivity, but it is not the only period in which people had that ability. Finally, Beck *et al* mention that reflexivity ‘arrives’ with the transition from the early modernity to the risk society. According to my thesis, reflexivity cannot be related to one chronological period, since it constitutes a continuous process that concerns each person regardless of the external environment in which she might find herself. Specific circumstances may aid the development of this process, by making routine action increasingly inapplicable, but they do not constitute necessary factors for the occurrence of reflexivity. In any epoch, social life presents surprises and unscripted situations which can only be dealt with reflexively.

### 3.3: Internal and External Conversation.

Having examined contributions on the relationship between internal and external conversation from developmental psychology and intrapersonal communication, as well as opposing views deriving from current sociology, I shall now discuss current social research directly related to ‘internal conversation’, ‘reflexivity’ and the dialogical means the individual uses to interact with herself and the external world.

#### 3.3.1: The Semiotic Self.

Norbert Wiley is one of the few sociologists who has evaluated the work of the pragmatists in a way which provides a deeper understanding of the idea of the self. Wiley approaches the self through pragmatism and his findings and insights will be extremely helpful to the present study, especially to the section that introduces the



investigation of internal conversation through the method of Conversation Analysis<sup>12</sup>.

It must be noted, however, that Wiley's work on the inner life of the individual is mainly theoretical, because the sociological literature at the time was lacking in empirical material<sup>13</sup> relating to the self and the internal cosmos of the individual. Wiley attempts to fill this void by outlining how sociology should approach the inner life of the individual and justifying why such study is important.

In 1994, Wiley proposed a synthetic interpretation of the pragmatists' theories. By combining Mead's and Peirce's theories (following suggestions by Colapietro, 1989), he created a more complete representation of the self. Having observed that Mead had set up only two conversational poles (I and Me) and Peirce another two (I and You), and that each lacked one of the poles presented by the other, Wiley proceeded to combine these two theories, creating the triad I-You-Me or, as he calls them in semiotic terms the: I-present-sign, Me-past-object You-future-interpretant. This combination thus includes both the elements proposed by Mead and Peirce and the relationship between them. A human being consists of present, future and past, sign, object and interpretant, and I-Me-You; these elements all overlap and entail interconnectedness and potential solidarity. Wiley proposes that within the self (i.e. the private part of the individual) there is a kind of inner forum inhabited by a 'community', the members of which are in constant conversation. According to Wiley, the 'I' takes the podium; but at the same time the 'I' is extremely adaptative

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>13</sup> For further discussion on empirical psychological material related to inner processes see:

Wood, W., Quinn, J., M. Kashy, D., A. (2002); Aarts, H, & Dijksterhuis, A. (2000); Oettingen, G., Pak, H., & Schnetter, K. (2001); Oettingen, G., & Mayer, D. (2002); Klinger, E., Barta, S., G., & Maxeiner, M., E. (1980); Carver, C., S. & Scheier, M., F. (1990a); Martin, L., L., & Teesser, A. (1996); Emmons R., A. (1986); Updegraff, J., A., Gable, S., L., & Taylor, S., E. (2004); Tugade, M., M., & Fredrickson B., L. (2004). It has to be noted that the above socio-psychological studies have been proven unhelpful with regard this thesis' investigation of the relationship between internal and external conversation.

and gives all participants within the internal forum the chance to speak<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, the inner sphere has all manner of interaction and also constitutes a unique version of intra-subjectivity of each person. This intra-subjectivity is so complex that participants can successfully lie to one other (Wiley, 1994: 18-39)<sup>15</sup>.

Colapietro (2006) recognises that Wiley is engaged in the project of reclaiming internal conversation through a critical engagement with pragmatist writings. According to Colapietro, Wiley self-consciously tries to complete what, in his judgement, the pragmatists left unfinished. Colapietro (2006) suggests that Wiley's work is illuminating in a number of respects, not least for assisting us in thinking through the question of privacy and interiority. He adds that Wiley brings both rational and temporal considerations into sharp focus (Colapietro, 2006: 32). Colapietro explains that Wiley brings together the work of Mead and Peirce, and comments on this attempt by saying that, if the self as a triad of triads are the 'participants' in the ongoing process of internal conversation we are inevitably drawn to see that inner dialogue is an inherently complex and inevitably messy affair in which the identity of the participants requires semiotic, temporal, and dialogical specification and redescription (Colapietro, 2006: 32). It is thus apparent that Colapietro is willing to follow Wiley's lead on combining Mead's and Peirce's work and that he obviously concurs in recognising the existence of internal conversation. As I will discuss in a later section, he also supports Archer's views on internal conversation and considers study in this area vital.

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<sup>14</sup> Further discussion on the turn-taking strategies of internal and external conversation will follow in the following chapter on Conversation Analysis.

<sup>15</sup> Lies and secrets were discussed in more detail in relation to Goffman's contribution to internal and external conversation in Chapter 1.



In 2006, Wiley attempted a detailed examination of the nature of inner speech, on both intra-subjective and dialogical: it involves two speakers, but not two persons, for these two speakers are aspects of a single person. Wiley underlines the fact that inner speech employs language but, nevertheless, is *de facto* private. Thus, *inter alia*, it is because 'non-linguistic imagery may also substitute for parts of a (inner) sentence' (Wiley, 2006: 321) and following Peirce what inner participants say to each other may be expressed through emotions, sensations, non-linguistic thoughts, speech qualities or even body language. It is significant that, according to Wiley, internal conversation can be understood only by the person within whom it is happening. In turn, this person can choose which part of each internal conversation she wishes to share with others and which part to keep private. Although internal conversation may have linguistic characteristics that could be understood by many people, it may also consist of symbols. In this case, the content of internal conversation is comprehensible only to the individual who produces it. Wiley states convincingly that 'we are little gods in the world of inner speech. We are the only ones, we run the show, we are the boss' (Wiley, 2006: 329). He also suggests that internal conversation is partly public, or publishable, and partly private, that is, that it is a 'semi-private' language. He declares that we can act because we can think, and the most important thoughts, are in the form of internal conversation as the pragmatists suggested.

Wiley is one of the few sociologists who distinguish the self from the social sphere, Archer is another, precisely because both theorists attach importance to personal properties and powers which they hold irreducible to the social level. It would be wrong to suggest that the self is completely separated and untouched by the social world, but few sociologists have been able to recognise what Wiley and Archer

perceive as the 'private' part of the self. Pragmatism came close to this view, but not close enough. A debate has begun about the self which is now being approached from a sociological perspective without it being seen as a purely or primarily social product. It is now maintained by the above theorists that the self consists of private and social elements, the former entailing some free will and the personal capacity to have and to hold unexpressed thoughts. Wiley has made a significant contribution to the conceptualisation of internal conversation in presenting the triadic nature of the individual's inner cosmos and in offering 'the I-Me-You triad as the formal apparatus of language' (Wiley, 2006: 332). Furthermore, he states: 'all I need to show is that outer events can sometimes seem like inner speech, somewhat as parole can enter the arena of language' (Wiley, 2006: 334). He explains that the individual uses much the same language format internally as she uses externally and that she also uses non-linguistic elements. Wiley penetrates the individual's private, personal environment and reveals the forms of conversation the individual produces internally by suggesting that 'the inaccessibility [of inner speech] maintains the highly private nature of this language's semantics and syntax' (Wiley, 2006: 337).

In unpublished communications he exchanged with Wiley, Colapietro suggested that Mead's and Peirce's dialogical theories might be combined, directly linking them to the sign-object-interpretant structure of the semiotic triad (Colapietro, 1989). Colapietro's suggestion is that the semiotic process underlies both Peirce's I-You and Mead's I-Me dialogues. To achieve the combination, he draws on Peirce's idea that the 'self is a sign' (in the first sense of the word), although Peirce never indicated which part of the self is the sign (in the second sense of the word), which part object and which part interpretant. Colapietro's suggestion synthesises three triads: present-



past-future, I-Me-You, sign-object-interpretant. Viewed in this way, the self undergoes a constant process of self-interpretation, as the present self interprets the past self to the future self. In dialogical terms, according to Wiley (1994), the 'I' and the 'You' interpret the 'Me' in order to give direction to the 'You'. Wiley observes that the strength of Colapietro's suggestion is that it offers a way of visualising a truly pragmatist theory of the self, one that unites the disparate strands of the movement and provides a new solution to the problem of pragmatism's unity. Thus, according to Wiley, Colapietro 'united Peircian and Meadian theory of self at the core, the semiotic (or 'selfing') process. Mead's I-Me reflexivity and Peirce's I-You interpretive process each becomes part of a more inclusive semiotic process, the I-Me-You triadic conversation' (Wiley, 1994: 15).

In 1994, Wiley attempted to investigate internal conversation in the way Colapietro had suggested and he concluded that the self has three roles: 'I', 'Me' and 'You'. He also proposed that the self has six positions: 'I', 'Me', 'You', Temporary visitors, Permanent Visitors and the Unconscious; and six dimensions: Person, Time/tense, Case, Freedom/determinism, Relation to generalised other and Cognitive availability to the 'I'<sup>16</sup>. Wiley stated that research on the internal conversation can be done, *inter alia*, through internal conversational text and thus confronted Wittgenstein's model of language in which the words 'private' and 'language' are contradictory because publicness, interactivity and intersubjectivity were both inherent and indispensable to language.

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<sup>16</sup> A detailed presentation of Wiley's six-by-six layout can be found in Wiley, 1994: 57-9.

Wiley approached the notion of self in pragmatistic terms and he introduced the concept of the ability individuals have to produce internal conversation. He explored the dialogic way the individual interacts with herself and the importance of his work on mediation is undeniable. Although he did not study or approach the mechanism that relates the individual to society, Wiley made it clear that the individual has a distinct and separate inner life and that this inner life is unique for each person. While he did not attempt to examine how the individual's inner life is connected with her external environment, he provided the means by which this relationship might be approached.

### 3.3.2: Reflexive Deliberation.

The most recent research on internal conversation and mediation is found in the work of Archer (1988, 1995, 2000, 2003, 2007). Archer's contribution to the examination and understanding of internal conversation is enormous. She was the first to point to internal conversation as a means of addressing the debate between structure and agency; she was also the first to underline the importance of the 'mechanism' of mediation between structure and agency. As Archer (2003) observes, simply to recognise that there is a difference between objectivity and subjectivity, or to talk about structure objectively conditioning agents and action, does not solve the problem of mediation. For Archer, the notion of mediation can be understood through the reflexive deliberation of social agents, but recent research and literature exhibit no attempts to address the subject from this standpoint. The concept of mediation between structure and agency and between internal and external conversation that I examine here was inspired and initially guided by Archer's examination of internal



conversation and mediation. The recognition of the interplay between internal and external conversation is important *per se*, but is not enough to explain the whole area that occurs between these two realities.

Two doors of scientific research were opened at the same time. The first concerns internal conversation. Here, social theory has offered few and very contradictory views (as previously discussed) and further research is vital. The second concerns mediation, the subject which provides the main focus of my present work. Mediation is a mechanism that Archer proposed through her exploration of internal conversation. She explains both how important it is for social theory to explore the phenomenon of internal conversation and that internal conversation and the external social structural factors are connected and separated from each other through mediation, which consists of the reflective deliberations of social agents.

Archer suggests that the way people reflexively deliberate upon what to do in the light of their personal concerns forms a part of a mediatory account; she believes that human reflexivity is central to the process of mediation. In addressing mediation, Archer (2003) identified three properties of reflexive deliberations: 1) genuinely interiority; 2) ontologically subjectivity; and 3) causally efficacy. She states that ‘only if the ‘internal conversation’ can be upheld as an irreducible personal property, which is real and causally influential, can the exercise of its powers be considered as the missing mediatory mechanism that is needed to complete an adequate account of social conditioning’ (Archer, 2003: 16). Therefore, it is clear that, for Archer, internal conversation plays a central role in the individual’s social life and, as such, must be studied and examined as a personal and private property which performs distinctive

tasks. It is only through the recognition of the actual nature of internal conversation that the mediation process can be examined. The mediation process comprises a two-way link between the social environment of the individual and her private inner existence. It was Archer who recognised the interrelation and interdependence between internal conversation and the mediation process and went on to examine this process insofar as it linked personal concerns and structural conditioning.

Archer identifies four modes of reflexivity: 1) 'communicative reflexives', which refers to those whose internal conversation requires completion and confirmation by others before resulting in a particular course of action; 2) 'autonomous reflexives', meaning those who sustain self-contained internal conversations leading directly to action; 3) 'meta-reflexives', referring to those who are critically reflexive about their own internal conversations and critical about effective action in society; and 4) 'fractured reflexives': those whose internal conversation intensifies their distress and disorientation rather than leading to any purposeful course of action (Archer, 2007: 93). Furthermore, she relates reflexivity to social mobility, more specifically concluding that 'the practice of communicative reflexivity represents the cement of society. Cumulatively autonomous reflexives foster social development because its practitioners inject considerable dynamism into the new positions they come to occupy. Generically, the practice of autonomous reflexivity is the source of society's productivity. Collectively, meta-reflexives function as the well-spring of society's self-criticism' (Archer 2007: 98-9). All of the above is premised on the notion 'no reflexivity, no society', in my opinion one of the most accurate concepts used to describe the link between society and its members. Archer links internal conversation with the wider idea of society. She proposes that society cannot be possible without



the reflexivity, and reflexive work of its component members, whilst at the same time distinguishing her ideas from past theories such as those of Bourdieu, Giddens and Beck.

While Archer's views have formed the basis of my own investigation, it must be emphasised that I will use different means to explore this phenomenon because of my central concern with the relationship between internal and external conversation.

In 2006, Colapietro (with reference to Archer) underlined the fact that the consistent emphasis on the deliberative function of the internal conversation can lead to a narrow perception of the individual's private life. He notes that Archer's emphasis on the mechanism of reflective deliberations is important, especially given the widespread denial of any efficacy being attached to the individual's internal/private deliberations (Colapietro, 2006: 34). Colapietro had already discussed and accepted the significance of Wiley's work on the self. Following Archer's suggestion that internal conversation is held to be 1) genuinely interior, 2) ontologically subjective, and 3) causally efficacious, Colapietro now stressed the fact that 'in order for inner deliberation to be genuine it must be efficacious' (Colapietro, 2006: 39). This statement raises some issues of interpretation: what Colapietro means exactly by the word 'genuine' and what is meant when he uses the word 'efficacious'. He explains that genuine 'deliberation must make a difference, an individualizing difference; it must mark the effective intervention of a differential individuality in the individual's own life' (Colapietro, 2006: 39), and he adds that 'our individuality, as an expression of our interiority, is not only inexpugnable but also efficacious' (Colapietro, 2006: 40). Archer refers to a 'genuine interior internal conversation' (Archer, 2003) which is not

the same as 'genuine deliberation'. Colapietro refers to this and he observes that inner genuine deliberation must be efficacious. He does not say, however, that deliberation is genuine because it is inner. Where Archer would probably disagree is in the case particularly of 'fractured reflexivity' where such subjects genuinely attempt to deliberate about their problematic situations but 'make no difference', beyond augmenting their own distress and dissatisfaction because they are unable to devise purposeful courses of action.

Thus, we cannot be sure what Colapietro precisely refers to when he talks about genuine deliberation; to put it another way, what kind of deliberation is genuine, and what are the kinds of deliberation? He explains that deliberation must make an individualising difference which must mark the effective intervention of a factor making for a difference within the individual (Colapietro, 2006:39). This description might be interpreted in different ways, one of which is: when the individual deliberates upon herself or the environment around her, her inner cosmos may change in an obvious, efficacious way that will influence her entire being and her future doing. Therefore, according to Colapietro, 'genuine deliberation' is expected to have a concrete, effective and potentially externalisable outcome. In my view, there are two ways that this suggestion can be understood: 1) the individual is deeply influenced by each and any period of deliberation that she is involved with, and the individual's inner cosmos is actually constructed and constantly re-constructed from the endless deliberations each individual produces; or 2) 'genuine deliberation' is the only kind of deliberation that can influence and change the inner cosmos of the individual. Thus, there are many other kinds of deliberation, but only 'genuine deliberation' can effectively reform the individual. Neither of the above interpretations is entirely



compatible with Archer's attempt to describe 'internal conversation' since the former implies that every inner deliberative 'phase' or 'period' deeply influences the individual. Each individual has a unique way of reflecting upon herself and the social environment, and each individual interacts in a unique way with herself and others. It is impossible to define the degree to which each individual is influenced and reforms her existence according to her every deliberation and interaction. The latter interpretation is problematic because each individual is unique and her internal functions are separate from any other individual's; the deliberations that actually change the inner life of the individual cannot be defined either, since there are so many and such different deliberations that a person undertakes every day that it is impossible for each person to know exactly which one makes the difference. However her DDD scheme (2000) is an attempt to have in one's life forming translation of one's concerns into social roles giving them expression. In addition, Archer has already made it clear that it is reasonable to propose that some social formations and ways of life generate more reflexivity than others, and she adds that it is not impossible, in principle, to substantiate this empirically (Archer, 2007).

Although Colapietro agrees with Archer's views on internal conversation, therefore, the exact way he understands and builds on her views remains unclear. He agrees entirely with the importance of the individual's inwardness and he underlines the need for further research. What is not clear, however, is how he understands the exact nature of internal conversation and its importance. He does discuss his views on this matter further, but merely states that he appreciates the importance of Archer's and Wiley's theories of internal conversation and the self. On the other hand, Mouzelis (n.d.) clearly defines his understanding of Archer's work and he offers specific

criticism. He believes that Archer both fails to point out that the 'externality' of structures is a function not only of historical time but also of hierarchically organised social space, and (with reference to her work in 2003) that, in linking the causal powers of people with those of structures, she overemphasizes intra-action (the internal conversation) and underemphasizes interaction (the external conversation).

Archer attempts to address the self in a distinctive and novel sociological manner. This does not mean that she rejects the importance of other aspects of the self (external conversation, hierarchically organised social space, etc). In response to the first part of Mouzelis' criticism, Archer recognises that internal conversation is the source of people's external conversations – after all, if she did not recognise external conversation, there would be no point in studying internal conversation – and that internal conversation is formed through human reflexive deliberations. This is her recent major contribution to sociology and her basic interest. This does not mean, however, that she does not recognise the importance of the hierarchically organised social space; as with all the other kinds of social structures she has discussed such issues extensively. Her more recent work displays an interest in a particular area of social theory and addresses an aspect that has not been previously studied in depth, namely, *how* social conditioning works. Social structures derive, amongst other things, from external conversation (which can only be achieved by interaction between individuals), but this social phenomenon is a huge element of social theory and has been studied by many sociologists in many different ways. Archer is not attempting to add something new to this area of social theory that is involved with external conversation, having addressed both structure (1979, 1995) and culture (1988) in previous publications.



The second of Mouzelis' criticisms can be similarly refuted. Mouzelis believes that when Archer links the causal powers of people with those of structures she overemphasizes intra-action (the internal conversation), and underemphasizes interaction (the external conversation). It might be argued that, since Archer tried to study the relationship between the individual and society, she did indeed depart from the individual to find out how the individual relates to society. She suggests that the individual produces internal conversation which can be transformed to external conversation if the individual so chooses. Therefore, as Mouzelis would agree, the study of internal conversation is essential in order to examine the link between the individual and the society. However, he suggests that in order to do that, external conversation also has to be examined. External conversation *per se* (that is, the externalised internal conversation) has been explored extensively in the past, and current research continues this examination. Interaction, as a form of external conversation has been studied by sociologists and is, indeed, one of the most popular subjects in sociology. The majority of sociologists are focused on socialisation, society and social structures. However, I concur with Mouzelis in relation to examining the exact nature of the relationship between internal and external conversation. The present study offers an attempt to examine the exact nature of the relationship between internal and external conversation and to propose a mechanism according to which this relationship is formed. Archer's current research in fact addresses the link between modes of reflexivity and participation in different forms of collective interaction. In other words what Mouzelis rightly seeks will be the subject of her ongoing research project.

In 2005, Elder-Vass offered an attempt to combine Archer's theory of reflexive deliberation and Bourdieu's theory of habitus, and concluded that the combination of these two theories gives rise to a third, more complete view of the individual. What Elder-Vass proposes is that 'we cannot eliminate the first-person perspective, nor the causal powers of human individuals, from the explanation of human action. However, we can retain these without denying the impact of the social world on human subjectivity and without denying the role of our biological parts in underpinning our behaviour. We can explain the powers of human individuals without explaining them away' (2005: 30). He also proposes that each individual is developed and formed through internal and external interactions and biological factors. This view covers most – if not all – aspects that current social sciences (sociology, psychology and socio-biology) use to approach the individual. The significance of this view is that it proposes that these approaches have to be combined in order to achieve an understanding of how the individual person operates.

In principle, few would disagree with Elder-Vass' formulation but, until quite recently, social theory (such as that of Bourdieu and Giddens) tended to address the individual only as socially constructed. Conversely, psychology attempts to approach the individual through her personality and ignores the considerable influence of society on the individual. Again, neuroscience studies the individual through her personal and special neurons, the cells and functions of the brain and the body that each individual uses and develops through use. Each of these disciplines can offer



significant material to the scientific world currently involved with the study of the individual<sup>17</sup>, which would be more beneficial than disciplinary imperialism.

### 3.3: Discussion.

In this chapter, I have discussed current approaches related to the understanding of the linkage between 'external' and 'internal' conversation and considered these theories crucial to my own examination of the relationship between internal and external conversation.

Vygotsky is one of the few theorists who clearly dichotomises the 'self' into its inner and external parts; he also proposes a dialogical method of relating these aspects of the self. Vocate advanced his understanding by describing how the individual can 'encode' and 'decode' elements of her inner and external communication. Developmental psychology and interpersonal communication thus offer two central contributions which will be examined further in the following chapter: internalisation of external conversation and externalisation of internal conversation. As will be discussed in later chapters, both constitute certain distinct 'stages' in mediation mechanism.

Bourdieu's and Giddens' views on the external aspects of the individual are related to Goffman's views; it became clear that these theorists' purpose is to study the individual in order to address society and not *vice versa*. They try to determine how and in what ways social properties and powers outweigh those of the individual. Their

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<sup>17</sup> I would add that the examination of mediation and reflection in mentally-disoriented patients could also offer interesting perspectives. A move in this direction, that is, towards neuroscience and biology, would definitely be promising for mediation and reflexivity studies.

work is essential to my thesis because it examines the external aspect of the individual. Although these theorists fail to recognise, and thus to examine, the inner cosmos of the individual, they provide a wide view of how the outer cosmos of the individual may impinge upon and affect the singular person. For Bourdieu, Giddens and Goffman, individuals are simply and solely social actors; yet, to my mind, this is not the priority: Giddens, Goffman and Bourdieu observe the individual in order to see the society within personhood, whereas we should observe individual persons and - persons interacting in groups - in order to understand where the sources of social transformation derive from. Finally, although Bourdieu and Giddens address the term 'reflexivity', they do not use it in a way that is relevant to the present work, and they use the term in disparate ways. Thus reflexivity, as used by Giddens and Bourdieu, cannot aid the study of mediation.

Wiley, Archer and, in some ways, Colapietro continue the work that Peirce, James and, to a certain extent, Simmel began on the understanding of the self. They are interested in the inner cosmos of the individual, how this inner cosmos is shaped and organised and how internal conversation operates. Wiley is more interested in describing what internal conversation is than in analysing its effects: he identified the phenomenon and he had then to formulate an appropriate basis for the examination of internal conversation in order to be able to discuss it further. Archer has worked in more depth on this issue and she has attempted to understand the link between structure and agency. She was the first to suggest that external social structure is mediated through internal reflexive deliberations.



The first three chapters have provided the theoretical approaches to internal and external conversation on which the present work is grounded. The chapters to follow will thus be based on these and will make frequent reference (especially in chapter 5) to the work of the theorists previously discussed. It has been vital to identify the disparate ways that different theorists approach internal and external conversation and to appreciate the importance of the deeper study of this relationship. The next chapter will discuss the sociological method of Conversation Analysis, which investigates external conversation, and how it can be used to examine internal conversation.

## CHAPTER 4

### The Methodological Aspect of Conversation Analysis.

#### 4: Prolegomena.

In this chapter, I will examine certain aspects of internal conversation and mediation, initially through the work of Lev Vygotsky, who was the first to define the specific elements of which inner speech is comprised, and then through Conversation Analysis (CA), a sociological method which investigates conversation (synonymous with external conversation, as used in the present work) in terms of action. The section on CA is in two parts: the first introduces CA as a sociological method and compares internal and external conversation according to CA's specific terminology and tools; the second part introduces the first stage of the mediation process, based upon Vygotsky's and Vocate's two main terms ('internalisation' and 'externalisation') and two further concepts deriving from CA, 'interpretation' and 'elucidation'.

#### 4.1: Vygotsky's comparison of Internal and External Conversation.

The core of my investigation is the examination of the relationship between internal and external conversation. As discussed previously, external conversation refers to the verbal interaction each person has with one or more individuals, while internal conversation is the non-vocal interaction the individual has with herself about herself and the social environment. Internal conversation can also be understood as the part of the potential external conversation that the individual chooses to keep unspoken. So far, I have presented various means (mainly theoretical) of exploring internal



conversation and its connection with external conversation. Here, I will attempt to investigate internal conversation through a sociological method/technique (CA) used to study external conversation. To my knowledge this is the first time an attempt has been made to use CA in this context.

The nature of 'inner speech' was first systematically explored by Vygotsky ([1934]1962). Although his approach has no connection with the methods used in CA, he was the first analyst both to compare the function of external and inner speech in terms of conversational elements and to claim that inner speech and external speech form a unity, with their own laws of movement: 'inner speech has a specific formation, with its own laws and complex relations to the other forms of speech activity' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 225). From his experiments, he concludes that 'inner speech must be regarded, not as speech minus sound but as an entirely separate speech function. Its main characteristic trait is its peculiar syntax. Compared with external speech, inner speech appears disconnected and incomplete' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 235).

According to Vygotsky, inner speech uses 'shortcuts' but remains abbreviated and would be incoherent to an outsider. In fact, he believes that inner speech shows a tendency toward a particular form of abbreviation, namely 'omitting the subject of a sentence and all words connected with it, while preserving the predicate' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 236). This view will be examined below through CA, but it is important to introduce the initial sense of how internal and external conversation could be compared and how inner speech functions. Vygotsky compares the functions of inner and external speech and states that, in the case of the former, syntactical

differentiation is at a minimum and expressions are used that would seem unnatural in external conversation. He believes that 'it is as much a law of inner speech to omit subjects as it is a law of written speech to contain both subjects and predicates' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 243). Some of Vygotsky's findings will be discussed in this section and it will be seen that the methods of CA have indirectly recognised his contribution, especially concerning syntax.

Vygotsky believed that in inner speech, syntax and sound are reduced to a minimum thus meaning is at the forefront. For him, inner speech works with semantics, not phonetics. The specific semantic structure of inner speech also contributes to abbreviations, and the syntax of meaning in inner speech is no less original than its grammatical syntax. More importantly, Vygotsky observes that a single word stands for a number of thoughts and feelings, and sometimes substitutes for a long and profound discourse. He thus makes it clear that, when a person develops inner speech, there is a contextual dependency; the individual knows what she is thinking and she does not therefore have to produce a full sentence internally (Vygotsky, [1934]1962). Vygotsky gives an example of a person waiting for a bus. When the bus appears, the person will probably internally say 'coming' and know exactly to what she is referring without former elaboration. Thus, for Vygotsky, inner speech is shorter because of its contextual dependence.

Vygotsky becomes more specific regarding the relationship between internal and external conversation. He states that inner speech is an autonomous speech function and that the 'transition from inner speech to external speech [...] is a complex, dynamic process involving the transformation of the predicative, idiomatic structure



of inner speech into syntactically articulated speech intelligible to others' (Vygotsky, [1934]1962: 248-9). It can thus be seen that he connects inner speech to external speech and explains how this transition is possible. Although external conversation and its syntax are examined through CA, there is no attempt to explain the structure of inner speech. I shall attempt to further investigate the connection made by Vygotsky, by introducing CA as a sociological technique that investigates external conversation and comparing the conversational elements of external conversation and the way internal conversation functions.

#### 4.2: The examination of Internal Conversation through Conversation Analysis.

Before introducing the methodological rationale of CA, I shall discuss some crucial points concerning the comparison between internal and external conversation. The first and most important point is that CA examines naturally occurring (external) conversations through recorded conversations and transcripts. Internal conversation, of course, cannot be recorded, or transcribed; it can only be recognised by the individual who is interacting with herself. It is possible, therefore, that serious and valid criticisms could be made about the attempt to compare internal and external conversation, especially using CA, since analogous tools and methods cannot be employed to investigate both internal conversation and external conversation. However, I must emphasise that my investigation is predicated on a view of internal and external conversation as equally significant aspects of social reality, even though it is not possible to investigate them via strictly analogous means. In my work, then, these notions will be studied and compared through the use of examples deriving from external as well as internal conversation. The examples of internal conversations used

will not be the outcome of recorded conversations (which would be impossible), but derive from conversations that various individuals (including myself) report having experienced. In this section, some of the examples that describe internal conversations are accompanied by reference to exploratory interviews on internal conversation. By these means, I shall argue that individuals have internal conversations about certain matters and that the conversational elements they use may be the same for both inner and external domains.

Therefore the primary aim of this work, is to provide a theoretical background for this relationship as a basis upon which future empirical research may be able to substantiate my suggestions. The purpose of comparing internal and external conversation through CA is to uphold the view (derived from Peirce, Wiley and Archer) that external conversation derives from internal conversation and that both forms (internal and external) share a number of common conversational elements.



#### 4.2.1: The method of Conversation Analysis.

In this section I will attempt an examination of internal conversation through CA. I will begin by presenting CA as sociological method and then analyse the concept of conversation, as identified in CA<sup>1</sup>. I will then introduce the action sequences as a subject of CA investigation with special reference to turn-taking, before considering whether or not such a patterning can be applied to internal conversation.

As a research tradition, CA emerged from ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), a branch of quantitative research that aims to discover the rules of conversational life to which 'actors' themselves subscribe in the course of verbal social interaction. In 1992, Harvey Sacks developed the approach now known as CA, which consists of a microanalysis of the sequential display of common understandings within conversation, using recordings and transcripts of talks as research tools<sup>2</sup>.

In 1958, Wittgenstein had proposed that meanings of utterances could not be understood merely in terms of truth conditional semantics, that is, fixed context independent meanings, but rather in terms of their immediate interactional context. Central to CA is the notion of talk as action (Austin, 1975) rather than communication. Such activity has been presented by Shotter (1993) as a person's linking of her activities in order to construct particular kinds of social relationships. Heritage notes that 'conversation analysts have generally pursued their objectives by

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<sup>1</sup> Some qualitative methods entail observation within a naturalistic setting, but can also include the use of interviews. Such methods are generally discovery-orientated (Mahrer, 1988) and are more concerned with the meaning, experiences and variations that occur within phenomena than with quantification (Crabtree and Miller, 1992). CA, conversely, is based on quantitative evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> See also Heritage (1984, 1988, 1995) and Schegloff (1993).

showing regular forms of organisation in a large variety of interactional materials produced by different speakers' (1984: 284). Yet CA is by no means a straightforward result of the combination of ethnomethodology and Goffmanian interaction analysis, however much it has profited from the new directions of inquiry which both have opened<sup>3</sup>.

While precedents existed in psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic studies, in work such as that of Crystal (1969), Fries (1952), and Pittenger *et al* (1960), it is only quite recently that functional linguists' attention has focused on the close examination of grammatical data from social interactions in real time. As Schegloff observes in a study of discourse and grammar (1996), we are now seeing the development of studies of interaction-and-grammar and, as Hopper (1988) has suggested, the emergent grammar may well not be grammar as linguistics understands it. CA addresses the social organisation of 'conversation', or 'talk-in-interaction', by a detailed analysis of tape recordings and their transcriptions. CA is a disciplined method of studying the local organisation of interactional episodes, and its unique methodology has enabled practitioners to produce considerable insights into the detailed procedural foundations of everyday life.

CA can be understood as a specific analytical trajectory used to reach a specific kind of systematic insight into the ways in which members of society 'do interaction'. As Atkinson and Heritage ([1984]2003) explain, the primary goal of CA research is the description and explication of the competencies that ordinary speakers use and rely on when participating in intelligible, verbal interaction. The idea is that conversations are

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<sup>3</sup> On the relationship between conversation analysis and ethnomethodology see Clayman and Maynard (1995), Goodwin and Heritage (1990) and Heritage (1984).



orderly, not only for the observing analysts, but also for participating members (Schegloff and Sacks, 1973: 290; Sacks, 1984: 22). This orderliness is seen as the product of the systematic deployment of specifiable interactional methods – ‘devices’, ‘systems’, an ‘apparatus’ – that are used by members as solutions to specifiable organisational problems occurring in social interaction. These methods have a two-fold characteristic: on the one hand, they are quite general; on the other, they allow for a fine-tuned adaptation to local circumstances; in the terminology used by Sacks *et al* (1978); they are both ‘context-free’ and ‘context-sensitive’<sup>4</sup>.

CA researchers insist on the use of audio or video recordings of episodes that are ‘naturally occurring’ and employ non-experimental interaction as their basic data (Heritage and Atkinson, [1984]2003: 2-3). Furthermore, CA is carried out by researchers studying material ‘from their own culture’. The anthropologist Michael Moerman (1988) has argued for what he calls a ‘culturally contexted conversation analysis’, a CA that is deeply informed by an ethnographic study of the culture in which the interactions studied are embedded. Sociologists such as Douglas (1970), Goffman (1971, 1981), and Karp and Yoels (1986) have recognised that the orderliness of everyday life forms the basis of society’s structure, that is, that orderliness is generated by social interaction through a plethora of particular conversations. Therefore the most appropriate method for studying everyday conversations and evaluating their importance, is CA as an ethnomethodological analysis. CA is the only sociological methodology that exclusively studies conversation as a social phenomenon. Thus it is of interest to examine to what extent

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<sup>4</sup> When Sacks *et al* refer to ‘context-free’, they may not understand the concept in the same way that Vygotsky did when explaining the contextual dependence of inner speech.

the CA approach to external conversation can guide my analysis of internal conversation and the mediation process.

#### 4.2.2: The notion of Conversation.

This basic assumption of CA is that, in order for conversation to be produced, at least two people have to be involved. However, as already explained, according to American Pragmatism, and to Wiley and Archer, the involvement of two different subjects/individuals is not, in fact, a requirement for the production of conversation<sup>5</sup>. Conversation can also be produced within oneself. This, however, is not the assumption underlying the bulk of studies undertaken on conversation. Instead the presumption is rather that one is dealing with an external and (usually) dyadic phenomenon.

The study of conversation is approached in a number of disparate ways by different disciplines within the cognitive and social sciences. Social psychologists, who have displayed a limited interest in inner speech and inner processes<sup>6</sup>, and discourse analysts often look very carefully at the content of talk in order to examine the ways in which people's concerns are linked to ideological constructs within society. As Forrester (1996) states, linguists are more concerned with the fine-grained analysis of prosody and how it is used by conversationalists to add emphasis to what is being said. Conversely, developmental psychologists often look for evidence of how

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<sup>5</sup> See further discussion in Chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion on the social psychological approach of inner speech and inner processes see McGuire and McGuire (1988), Cooley ([1902]1964), Sullivan (1953), Farr and Moscovici (1984), Morin and Everett (1990), Duval and Wicklund, (1972), Wicklund (1975), Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss (1975), Rime and LeBon (1984), Hull, *et al*, (2002), Carver (1979), Carver and Scheier (1981), Gibbons (1990), Buss (1980), Morin (2002), Trapnell and Campbell, (1999), Carver and Scheier (1985), Scheier and Carver (1983) and Siegrist (1995).



children acquire social and cognitive skills by considering how they manage to enter into conversations with peers and parents (Forrester, 1996). Arguably, however, the contemporary study of conversation is dominated by the work of conversation analysts, a group of sociologists and social scientists. Their aim is to study conversation as everyday action, and therefore interaction between people.

Every day, everybody is producing conversations. Within different settings, people produce naturally or non-naturally occurring conversation<sup>7</sup>, whether short or long, formal or informal. In each case, the aim of these conversations is to initiate interaction between people. Almost everything we do that directly concerns other people involves conversation, and thus interaction. However, as Nofsinger (1991) notes, there are times when we may say something we should not, or not say something we should; nevertheless, people usually succeed in producing ordinary speech and achieving some sort of interaction.

Nofsinger identifies some important reasons why scientists investigate conversation: 1) most of the time conversation works well, i.e. 'participants'<sup>8</sup> manage to interpret and produce talk; 2) people use specific techniques and patterns to produce conversation, and this system can be adapted to different settings and occasions; 3) conversation is a major part of people's lives, and functions to organise society itself<sup>9</sup>;

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<sup>7</sup> Non-naturally occurring conversation is defined as 'institutional conversation', i.e. the conversation produced within a specific environment and setting, such as a courtroom, a classroom or a doctor's surgery.

<sup>8</sup> The term 'participants' will be used throughout the rest of this chapter to refer to subjects who produce conversation. This term derives from CA studies and denotes the participation of at least two individuals.

<sup>9</sup> Simmel (in Spykman, 1965), Douglas (1970), Goffman, (1971, 1981), and Karp and Yoels (1986) have recognised that the orderliness of everyday life forms the basis of society's structure. That orderliness is generated in social interaction, primarily conversation.

and 4) people become acquaintances; they produce, form and maintain interpersonal relations, through conversation.

As can be seen, Nofsinger (1991) underlines the importance of *interaction* as the first and main characteristic of conversation and, as a practitioner of CA, he insists on the participation of at least two people in order for a conversation to be produced, i.e. for messages to be exchanged. Participants take turns in exchanging these messages, and talk is shaped according to what has been said so far and what is about to be said. What is especially relevant is that participants take it in turns to speak. According to Nofsinger, the second characteristic of conversation is that it is *locally managed*. What he means by this is that the speakers within an encounter determine who is going to speak next, and the duration, content and manner of speech employed. Nofsinger's third characteristic is that conversation is *mundane*, commonplace and practical. As Atkinson (1982) and Heritage (1984) observe, conversation serves as a foundation, the mundane basis for other forms of communication<sup>10</sup> and for social organisation generally.

Heritage (1984) mentions that the study of conversation has revealed organised patterns of stable, identifiable structural features that stand independently regardless of the psychological or other characteristics of particular speakers. Therefore, as participants take turns, their conversation takes on a shape and a design. Sacks *et al* (1978) call this process 'recipient design'. Heritage (1984) also notes that, as participants shape their utterances, their utterances also contribute to the unfolding of the context in a way that maintains or changes it. CA thus sees talk as being organised

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<sup>10</sup> The study of linguistic communication, of the actual language used in specific situations, is known as pragmatics.



in recognisable ways<sup>11</sup>. Craig and Tracy (1983) suggest that a group of utterances seems to be about the same topic, a characteristic they refer to as *coherence*. Furthermore, there appear to be typical utterance 'shapes' for producing certain actions.

Conversation is achieved primarily through talk. When they talk, however, participants are not simply saying something to each other. They are doing something in parallel: directing communicative or social actions at one another. 'Conversational actions' are actually interpretations of the other participant's utterances (Nofsinger, 1991). Jacobs (1985) and Jacobs and Jackson (1983) argue that a participant is able to recognise what action the other participants are producing because people understand the 'language game'<sup>12</sup>, or, as Craig calls it, the 'formal' goal (1986: 266). Furthermore, people can be suspicious of the tactics used to approach the goal.

Having established the notion of conversation as a concept which refers to external conversation, I shall proceed to a more detailed analysis of its components and features.

#### 4.2.3: Action Sequences.

To recap, every conversational action occurs in a sequence of other conversational actions. However analytical method of CA is concerned only with vocalised conversation or, in my own terminology, external conversation. Nevertheless, CA

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<sup>11</sup> For example TCUs and TRPs which will be analysed in later sections.

<sup>12</sup> With 'language game', a term coined by Wittgenstein (1958), the idea is to apply what people know about ordinary everyday games (such as chess, checkers, tic-tac-toe, card games) to the conduct of conversation.

offers techniques for examining the connection between external conversation and mediation (i.e. the 'authorisation' the self gives for internal conversation to become external); even though internal conversation is completely ignored by the discipline. All the same, CA studies conversational characteristics or conditions that constitute speech, and some of these features also occur in internal conversation. Action sequences constitute a fundamental design recipients use in order to produce everyday conversations. Motley (1990) proposes the term 'recipient design' for the shaping of utterances speakers produce in order to fit the needs and backgrounds of the participants who will likely interpret those utterances, but this does not mean, when a speaker produces conversation that the shape of the talk was planned in advance. As Nofsinger (1991) observes, when we discuss the 'design' of an utterance, we mean that it has a particular shape or design (just as we can talk about the design of a snowflake without implying that anyone planned it).

Nofsinger (1991) also explains that conversation is not merely a collection of actions, but a process of interaction. An utterance represents not only what the speaker says or intends to do, but the talk that surrounds it, and the way an utterance is interpreted and designed depends on where it is located within a sequence of actions. When one action has been produced, participants orientate themselves to the presence or absence of the relevant subsequent action. This expectation by the participants that the subsequent action should be produced leads them to behave as if it has happened, even if it does not occur. Schegloff and Sacks (1973) propose a concept of action in pairs, which they call 'adjacency pairs'. An adjacency pair has the following characteristics: 1) it is a sequence of two communicative actions; 2) the two actions often occur adjacent to one other; 3) they are produced by different speakers; 4) one



action is a first pair part and the other is a second pair part (i.e. they are sequentially ordered); and 5) they are categorised or connected so that any given first pair part must be matched with one of a relatively few types of second pair parts. A characteristic occasion in which adjacency pairs occur is during question-answer conversations, such as testifying in a courtroom, or in summons-answer pairs. Another characteristic example of adjacency pairs is the opening of telephone conversations. Here is a hypothetical example:

M: Hello?

C: Maria?

M: Yeah?

C: Hi!

M: Hi!?

C: It's Carmen!

M: Oh hi, Carmen!

In this example of external conversation, we can see the characteristics of an adjacency pair. It is easy to hypothesise that an analogous example cannot be used in the case of internal conversation, because of the suppression of the subject, as mentioned earlier. However, this does not mean that adjacency pairs do not occur in internal conversation.

An adjacency pair is a nominative structure in which participants apply the rule that, when a speaker produces a first pair part, 'a second speaker should relevantly produce a second pair part immediately on completion of the first' (Heritage, 1984: 247). Quinton (1967) notes that, if someone wants to find out what she believes about a

matter, she has to ask herself what she would reply if someone else were to ask her this question; he adds that, when someone asks herself a question, it 'is not an auditory image of one's own voice answering it, as if one were listening to a recording of herself, but the incipient states of the process of actually giving the answer' (Quinton, 1977: 88). Myers (1986) agrees that one's knowledge of what one believes derives from this process of questioning and answering within ourselves.

While CA does not refer to the formation of internal conversation, the use of inner adjacency pairs, and thus the form of inner questioning and answering, may be seen through an example taken from a hypothetical internal dialogue. The following illustration will help us understand how adjacency pairs may be identified within internal conversation. Let us assume that a student (A) produces the following internal conversation in the middle of her Spanish examination:

A1: What is the answer to this question?

A2: How should I know? I'm not Spanish!

A3: But you learn Spanish: you should know!

A4: Yeah, right!

A5: Why is the examiner looking at me?

A6: Maybe he knows I don't know the answer.

A7: What should I do? He'll tell my tutor!

A8: I'll write down the first Spanish word I can remember.

In this example, the whole sequence is subdivided into pairs in order to make the adjacency pairs recognisable. The turn sequences are invented, but an internal conversation such as this could occur to any student during an examination. The



characteristics of adjacency pairs proposed by Schegloff and Sacks (1973) can be seen in this example. In every pair, there are two communicative actions (e.g. in line 1, A asks a question and in line 2 she justifies her ignorance). The two actions occur adjacent to each other, and the first action is the first pair part, while the next is the second pair part. Each first pair part is followed by a specific second pair part that corresponds to it (e.g. in line 5, A wonders why the examiner is looking at her and in the next line proposes a possible reason).

The above example demonstrates that adjacency pairs are not produced solely by different speakers interacting. Within internal conversation, the 'Me' and the 'I' may produce a conversation in turns<sup>13</sup>. Thus, as I will argue, turning-taking occurs during internal conversation; people do not produce endless monologues. This can be seen in the examples given here, but also through the notion of conversation *per se*. Conversation refers to dialogue, not monologue. Consequently, during internal conversations the 'Me' produces adjacency pairs with the 'I', even though only one individual is involved.

In CA, adjacency pairs constitute a complex feature, which includes a number of sub-categories and specific kinds of pairs that occur in different circumstances. These will not be discussed in the present work, as they add no further understanding to the project in hand. What I would emphasise is that the design of adjacency pairs as a characteristic of external conversation may also be observed within internal conversation. Heritage (1984) notes that even though adjacent placement is not the glue that binds adjacency pairs together, it is still one of the most important

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<sup>13</sup> A view extensively discussed in relation to the theory of American Pragmatism (see Chapter 2).

relationships between utterances in conversation. For my purposes, it is even more important to recognise that adjacency placement is not a form that appears only in external/expressed conversation, but derives from a deeper source, that of internal conversation.

#### 4.2.4: Turn-Taking Organisation.

A feature that underlies all forms of talk-in-interaction is its turn-taking organisation. This is an important organisational device for the structuring of talk-in-turns, especially the units, known as turn constructional units - TCUs (Sacks *et al*, 1974: 702-3). As Schegloff, (1996) states, TCUs can be identified as 'grammatical' structuring, as language's 'equivalent' fitting to the organisational need of turns as the 'host space' in which language deposits are accommodated. TCUs may constitute complete turns because if they are completed, transition to another speaker becomes required. The TCU is a key unit of language organisation for talk-in-interaction; its natural habitat is the turn in talk; its organisation should be called 'grammar' (Schegloff, 1996).

Schegloff (2000) suggests that turn-taking is an organisation of practices designed to allow routine achievement of what appears overwhelmingly to be the most common default setting of speakership during talk-in-interaction: one party at a time. This is less a matter of politeness than of the constitutive features of commonplace talk-in-interaction as an enabling institution for orderly interaction between people. Schegloff (1988) mentions that the absence of such organisation would subvert the possibility of stable trajectories of action and responsive action through which goal-orientated



projects can be launched and pursued through talk-in-interaction, whether or not they are successful.

Sacks *et al* (1978) claim that turns are constructed from any of four different sized units of talk: 1) one word, i.e., constructed with a single lexical item ('yes', 'Mary', 'eight'); 2) a phrase, i.e., several words that do not constitute a sentence and that do not contain both a subject and a predicate ('in the garage', 'at home', 'over there'); 3) a clause, i.e. a group of words that comprises all necessary components, but cannot constitute a 'stand alone' sentence because its completion is dependent on the inclusion of further material ('the woman who gave today's lecture', 'when we finish studying')<sup>14</sup>; 4) a full sentence ('Mary is going to Nepal'). The important thing about each of these turns is that participants can project where they will end. The point that participants recognise as the potential end of the turn is called the 'transition relevance place' (TRP). In turn-taking, the various practices participants use to change from one speaker to another operates at the TRP.

During external conversations, at least two people are involved, and it is apparent that, when they talk, they need to know how they can take turns without producing a problem. CA explains how this transition is possible. However, in applying this to internal conversation, it can be seen that the turn construction units to which Sacks *et al* (1978) refer and the TRP as the point at which a turn is likely to be completed are not easy to detect. Although a person internally uses turns to compose a dialogue, it is not necessary for that individual to be able to recognise when the first turn might be completed in order to start the next one. The TRP technique cannot be used to

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<sup>14</sup> What are known in English grammar as 'subordinate clauses'.

examine the transition from one turn to the next in internal conversation because internal conversation does not involve two different people.

If a person is talking to herself, she does not care how or when or why she changes turns. She *is* the turn, the conversation, the content, the TRP. Her internal existence comprises, *inter alia*, all conversational components because she creates them all. It is not important to recognise how we change internal turns, but it is significant to know that individuals use turns both internally and externally. We cannot conclusively demonstrate the occurrence of TRPs empirically within internal conversation (although this does not mean that they do not occur) because we do not have the means (access) to do so. Furthermore, as Wiley (following Peirce) argues, in addition to the thoughts, desires and intentions that people experience internally, individuals can also create internal icons and pictures of things, people, memories, etc. While an individual can try to describe an internal icon she views, it is extremely hard to represent it in complete detail, and it is also clear that the listener does not have the ability to represent internally the identical icon in exactly the same way. This iconic ability the individual has is acknowledged and it is clear that (at present) no science has the tools to examine this human ability since we cannot put an internal microphone/camera inside an individual's mind and hear what she hears and see whatever she sees. By the same token, we cannot record internal conversation and analyse every second of every turn. This does not mean, however, that such conversations do not take place, nor that they have no specific form or do not follow specific patterns. TRPs are a technical concept that cannot easily be identified in internal conversation, but it is not necessary to make such exact identifications.



CA also examines turn allocation in turn-taking. Sacks *et al* (1978) have identified three techniques that participants use to determine who gets the next turn, and they propose a set of rules which fix the rights and responsibilities of participants, based on the assumption that speakers change close to TRPs (i.e. the point that participants recognise as the potential end of the turn): 1) current speaker selects next; 2) speaker self-selects; and 3) speaker continues speaking. This model presents conversational turn-taking as locally managed by participants<sup>15</sup>. However, during internal conversation, such management is not needed, because the next speaker is the same as the previous one, even though turns are changing<sup>16</sup>. Thus, there is no need to analyse the internal methods by which a person *manages* her turns because this procedure is to a lesser or greater extent assumed: 'I' is choosing 'Me' as the next speaker (and *vice versa*); the individual internally manages this turn system and, clearly, the main assumption of 'one at a time' cannot but be recognised and followed<sup>17</sup>.

The system of turn-taking proposed by Sacks *et al* (1978) is closely connected with the structure of conversational progress. The turn system is largely responsible for several obvious structural characteristics of everyday conversation. Sacks *et al* (1978: 10-11, 14-40) relate their turn-taking model to a list of 'grossly apparent facts' about conversation. In each case, they describe how the fact derives from some features of the model. The first fact is that only one participant speaks at a time. This is self-evident in internal conversation. Another fact, that the order and distribution of

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<sup>15</sup> Tanaka (1999) refers to techniques, which constitute an important part of turn-taking discussion, for selecting the next speaker. These are: repair initiations, tag questions, incorporation of participant's social identities. These techniques cannot, of course, be relevant to internal conversation, since there is no 'next speaker' to take the turn, but only a single speaker who uses different turns without necessarily using a TRP.

<sup>16</sup> I will not therefore offer an in-depth analysis of the components of turn allocation, i.e. how participants manage to take a turn and why it is important to keep the floor.

<sup>17</sup> There is, of course, a structure followed by internal conversation (as Vygotsky mentions), but this structure could be considerably different from external conversation and does not necessarily involve techniques of turn-taking allocation.

speaker turns is not fixed or determined in advance, but varies within and between conversations, is again relevant to internal conversation, since turns do not have any specific order, and thus 'I' and 'Me' change turns without even being aware when the turn belongs to 'I' and when to 'Me'. A third fact is that the size and length of turns varies from one turn to the next, and what participants say in their turns, or what actions they perform with their turns, is not restricted or specified in advance. These points, too, are applicable to internal conversation. Finally, as Sacks *et al* underline, speaker change occurs, and again this is applicable to internal conversation which, as we have already seen, is not in the form of monologue. Thus, speaker change does occur, even though it does not involve different individuals.

CA suggests that conversation derives from its turn-taking system (although Tanaka (1999) observes that it may occur in a more random form); its most noticeable characteristics are closely linked to the ways in which turns are constructed and allocated and when people recall the conversations of others they seem to reconstruct their turn-taking system in the way that it was heard. Thus, it can be said that turns are constructed and allocated in the same way between internal and external conversation when a person recalls a conversation. However, when the individual produces internal turns and conversations with herself, the form turns take may not be exactly the same. We simply do not have enough evidence to determine this.

Sacks *et al* (1978) also underline that, during a conversation, participants listen to what the other speakers are talking about: there is a motivation for listening. This motivation may not be due to the interest participants have in the conversation, but because of the turn-taking system. Participants need to listen to others' utterances or



they will not be able to recognise when it is their turn. Furthermore, if the current speaker is not sure who the next speaker will be, there is a possibility of competition for the next turn.

Turn reservation is another issue that concerns participants. There is the potential for problems when one participant wishes to take an extended turn, which could be viewed by the others as a short monologue.

These issues constitute typical problems of external conversation that internal conversation does not face. When the 'Me' is talking to the 'I', the self always listens. Competition for the next turn cannot arise, since there is only a single participant with one 'inner voice'; turn reservation happens constantly and is in no way problematic. Often during an internal conversation, the individual, while producing turns, may also produce a short – or longer – monologue, without in fact neglecting the turn system she follows.

Here it will be useful to put forward Archer's assessment of turn-taking during internal conversation (2003: 98-9). According to Archer, when we talk to ourselves, we alternate between subject and object in the turn-taking process, but a moment of simultaneity between them is still maintained. The way the object and subject interact internally can have the form of 'alternation because first there is the subject's 'premonitory' notion, then her articulated thought-object, followed by the subject's reaction and then revisions. The process of revision will again go through the same cycle from tendency to crystallisation, to critique, to reformulation and so on. The sequence ends only when the subject reaches solidarity with the object' (Archer,

2003: 98). It could, therefore, be argued that every conversation, external or internal, involves turn-taking. The form internal turn-taking takes might be different from the external form, and conceptually more complex. It is important to recognise that all forms of talk are based on a turn-taking pattern, and that this is also the case for internal conversation.

Another characteristic of internal conversation is the treatment of silences. CA studies silences with the same interest as every other feature of conversation. Sacks *et al* (1978) distinguish three different types of silence: 1) the lapse, which occurs before and after TRPs; 2) the gap, which lasts about one second; and 3) the pause, which is longer and occurs during a speech. Silences also occur in internal conversation: an individual may cease production of internal conversation for a while. However, the aspect of time that distinguishes the kinds of silences is an issue that requires detailed examination in the context of internal conversation, in which time is not a measurable dimension because people do not have a sense of how much time they need to produce an internal turn or even silence. Internal silences occur (although perhaps not often), but we cannot demonstrate that they are based on a similar model to that proposed by Sacks *et al*. The length of an internal silence can be understood only on exceptional occasions. For example, when a person is terrified by an incident, she usually 'freezes', ceasing to produce any internal or external conversation. By the time the shock has passed, it may or may not be possible for her to estimate how long she was silent (internally and externally).

Nofsinger (1991) argues that, in general, conversation is orderly because the participants work to make it so. This is as true for turn-taking as it is for other aspects



of conversation. In fact, it is because participants make turn-taking orderly for each other that it is recognisable as orderly by analysts and other observers. Shimanoff (1980) suggests that the turn-taking system is a normative system, that is, participants gravitate to the observance of certain communication rules. In most cases participants design their talk so that it can be seen to conform to one or more norms of turn-taking. Yet a violation of turn-taking norms, especially when it does not occur close or near to TRPs, can be brought about by interruption. Interruption refers to the talk two or more participants produce at the same time which disrupts the normal operation of the conversational turn; conversation analysts call this 'overlap' or 'simultaneous talk' (which is the term adopted here<sup>18</sup>). The concept seems related not only to conversational structure, but also to such factors as whether the participants like or agree with each other. Simultaneous talk cannot occur during internal conversation. This is because simultaneous talk involves at least two different people talking at the same time, and this cannot happen when 'Me' is talking to 'I'. Just as an individual cannot produce two simultaneous or different voices or utterances, she cannot do this internally. Thus, simultaneous talk is not a characteristic of internal conversation. An internal conversation might be interrupted because another person begins talking to us or an external stimulus has made us think of something different, but such cases do not involve simultaneous talk. It could be argued that they merely involve change of the turn/floor occupier.

CA addresses another aspect of turn-taking: its syntactic, intonational and pragmatic resources. Studies have begun to highlight the significance of grammar as a resource in the production and recognition of 'coherent' conversation (i.e. conversation

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<sup>18</sup> For further discussion on simultaneous talk see Chalari (2005).

coherent to participants) and for diverse interactional activities<sup>19</sup>. Various scholars have shown how grammar may be consequential for the organisation of turn-taking (Ford *et al*, 1996; Schegloff, 1996; Chalari, 2005). Conversational interaction can be understood as a form of social organisation through which the work of most institutions of society (family, economy, policy, socialisation) is accomplished. Therefore, grammatical and syntactical structures of language may be understood as being at least partially shaped by the organisation of the turn<sup>20</sup>, the organisational unit that 'hosts' grammatical units (Schegloff, 1979), and vice versa.

Grammatical and syntactical structures are a central characteristic of internal conversation. It can be posited that individuals use the same grammatical and syntactical patterns to produce internal utterances without always being aware of this underlying pattern. Sometimes, however, when a person internally performs or rehearses, for example a formal speech, she will carefully use the most appropriate vocabulary, syntax and grammar. Like external conversation, internal conversation is produced according to specific grammatical rules; this applies to all languages<sup>21</sup>. Internal conversation is private and personal; it is not produced with reference to the different rules and patterns used in external conversation. Yet, while it may be shorter or change topic rapidly, or use icons instead of words, the individual is still using the same language with the same basic elements. Thus it follows that, if grammatical and syntactical structures are important for the production of external conversation, they are also vital for the production of internal conversation (Chalari, 2007). Vygotsky

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<sup>19</sup> See Ochs *et al* (1996), Ford (1993), Ford and Mori (1994), Lerner (1991), Mori (1994, 1996a/b), Hayashi (1997), and Hayashi and Mori (1998).

<sup>20</sup> Unit-types in the English language include sentential, clausal, phrasal and lexical constructions.

<sup>21</sup> Although those grammatical rules, of course, may differ between languages.



([1934]1962) hypothesised the use of syntactic and grammar patterns within inner speech and suggested that such patterns develop as the child grows up.

To recap, turn-taking organisation is observed during verbal interaction, that is, external conversation, but certain aspects of such an organisation can occur within internal conversation as well. Many of the forms followed by external conversation, as proposed by CA, can thus be seen to have analogies within internal conversation.

In earlier chapters, I offered a comparison between internal and external conversation. In this chapter, I have so far presented how CA examines external conversation using certain ‘tools’ – such as ‘action sequences’, ‘adjacency pairs’, ‘turn-organisation’, ‘turn-allocation’, the aspects of projectability, simultaneous talk and silences, and the place of syntactical/grammatical elements – in order to determine whether such tools or such approaches to external conversation might be used in the study of internal conversation, and I concluded that some are definitely applicable to internal conversation. An objection might be made on the grounds that, while CA findings derive from naturally occurring conversations and internal conversation cannot be observed or recorded, internal conversation cannot be studied with the tools of, or even compared with, external conversation. In response, I maintain that external conversation derives from internal conversation and that certain aspects of both ‘kinds’ of conversation share common ground. CA itself does not seek to explain where external conversation derives from, but in the next section I will clarify how CA may explain the link between internal and external conversation although this was never an aim of its protagonists.

#### 4.3: The investigation of Mediation through Conversation Analysis.

I shall now attempt to explore the relationship between internal and external conversation (i.e. the mediation process) by using the new tools CA has offered. I will begin by describing the transition from external conversation to internal conversation, and offer a model for this. I will then present mediation as a procedure of elucidation and discuss the common ground shared by external and internal conversations, referring to examples and evidence from exploratory research to describe where and how the two kinds of conversation meet. To begin with, mediation will be examined as a process of interpreting external conversation, and I will supply a detailed schema to represent this interpretation.

As will be discussed more fully in later chapters, mediation consists of certain stages. The first stage is based on Vygotsky's and Vocate's concepts of *internalization*. I will explore how the tools and analytical approach of CA can help to show that the first stage of mediation (i.e. internalisation) is achieved through *interpretation* of internal and *elucidation* of external conversation. The following analysis will explain how these notions (interpretation and elucidation) become essential components of the mediation process.



#### 4.3.1: The transition from External to Internal Conversation.

Before attempting to apply CA's conception of external conversation to the notion of internal conversation, I will present certain relevant terminology, some of which has been already introduced.

Conversation is a process by which the participants direct communicative or social actions towards one another. What CA demonstrates is that it is important to understand what people *do* in a conversation rather than what they say. CA analyses each utterance participants produce during turn-taking in conversation. Participants produce utterances that convey certain meanings. Austin (1975: 98-101) describes the action of 'saying something' (i.e. utterance) as the 'performance of a locutionary act' (Austin, 1975: 98) In this way he attempts to describe the twofold existence of an utterance: the utterance as a linguistic subject of research and as an action. In language games, as in every game, participants employ moves or strategies. According to Nofsinger's (1991) system of conversational actions, in language, such strategies take the form of moves in language games. According to Austin (1975: 98-101), utterances constitute the locutionary act, while the moves of the game, or social/communicative actions, constitute *illocutionary acts*. Thus, in a conversation, the production and interpretation of an utterance as an illocutionary act correspond to making a move in the game. This can be illustrated by an example:

A: I love your dress.

B: Oh, thank you. I just bought it.

Here, A's remark 'I love your dress' is merely an utterance (locutionary act). However, as four words brought together in a certain grammatical order, it is also a

communicative action, a move in the game or, in this case, a ‘compliment’. This compliment constitutes an illocutionary act. Thus, an illocutionary act is essentially the actual interpretation of an utterance. According to Austin’s speech theory, further developed and systematised by Searle (1969), the term ‘illocutionary act’ is synonymous with the term *speech act*.

Now let us consider the following example:

A: Would you like to go for a walk?

B: Maybe later.

This illustrates what Nofsinger (1991) calls *conversational action*. Here, A is making an offer to B, which he rejects. The significant aspect is that the conversational action is not what A says, but the offer he makes. As a conversational action, the offer that A makes to B is the underlying action of the utterance. It is the force, i.e. the intention, that guides speaker A to produce it. I propose that this action is in fact the outcome of an *internal conversation* produced by A before he decided to externalise and verbalise that offer. Conversational actions, which antedate verbal conversation (i.e. external conversation) and form an ‘offer’ into action, and thus intention, constitute the outcome of a procedure of internal conversation. In other words, a decision made through internal conversation has been transformed into external conversation. Before asking the question ‘Would you like to go for a walk?’ in the example above, A has already gone through several stages: 1) wanting to go for a walk himself; 2) feeling the need for company; 3) deciding that B would be good company; and 4) actually giving the permission for all these thoughts to be transformed into an utterance which takes the form of an offer. This offer as a conversational action represents the *interpretation* of a specific internal conversation, that is, the bridge between the



private level of internal conversation and the verbalised level of external conversation.

Thus, I propose that what Nofsinger defines as *conversational action* is, in fact, the *mediator* between the internal *conversation* and the external *interaction*. Utterances or locutionary acts thus constitute external conversations, i.e. verbal representations of inner beliefs and thoughts. The *interpretations* of those utterances comprise what Austin calls the illocutionary act. These interpretations can be viewed as mediators between verbal utterances and internal conversations. This can be represented schematically, as follows:

**Internal conversation**

(intentions, thoughts, wants, non-verbal experiences)



**Mediator**

(interpretation, i.e. moves of game, communicative action, illocutionary action)



**External conversation**

(utterances, locutionary actions, verbal speech)

Austin (1975) introduces the term *perlocutionary act* to represent the effect of the speech act, as in the effect of the act of the compliment. Perlocutionary effects, however, are less central components of conversation itself than results of conversation. These effects can also be seen, as Nofsinger (1991) notes, as the goals of some conversations. Sometimes the externalised speech actions have to be repeated, so as to be understood, learned etc. Thus, a mother might have to reiterate many times to her child that she should not eat too many cookies until the child accepts what she has been told; a teacher may have to repeat a lesson until the students have learned it, and, on a wider stage, the UN may need to repeat the same negotiations with Iran until the problems of nuclear weapons production are resolved.

The idea of ‘interpretation’ may derive indirectly from CA conceptions, but it can also be argued that it represents a linguistic procedure. Therefore, a more robust theoretical formulation is required, which both resolves this issue yet relies on stronger arguments than the ones of indirect derivations. As discussed earlier, Peirce investigated the inner life of the individual, and Wiley’s analysis of Peirce and Mead



led to the proposition that the ‘ego’ was a continuing self consisting of the past ‘Me’ (i.e. the object), the present ‘I’ (i.e. the sign) and the future ‘You’ (i.e. the interpretant)<sup>22</sup>. If we attempt to extend the above model, the following scheme can be advanced:



Our inner thoughts, intentions and desires constitute the Peircian ‘Me’, since they always belong to the past; it is this part of the self that pre-exists mediation and external conversation. Peirce suggests that the past ‘Me’ represents the ‘critical self’, which consists of habits and enablements. The ‘critical self’ is a sum of the past, orientation towards the future and deposed in the present. Thus, as Peirce understands it, the past ‘Me’ is the individual’s consciousness<sup>23</sup>. The ‘Me’ is the part of the

<sup>22</sup> Further discussion on the I-You-Me model is found in Chapters 2 and 3.  
<sup>23</sup> For further discussion on the relationship between the conscious and unconscious see Freud (1900, 1901, 1905, 1915-19), Carver and Scheier (1996), Rhawn (1980), and Bowers (1984). One of the most useful descriptions of how the conscious is related to the unconscious for my purposes is Searle’s: ‘The

individual's self to which no-one else has access, in consciousness or in internal conversation. Only the individual herself has access to this inner life.

The mediator, the interpretation of internal conversation, can be understood as equivalent to the Peircian 'I', the present self, which possesses the power of transformation. The moves of the game, or the communicative action, constitute the subject's orientation at T1. The internal conversation will be articulated if and when the self gives permission for it to become external. This interpretation of our inner existence can be understood as performed by the 'present' part of the self, since it intervenes chronologically between the past and the future self (and intervenes between internal and external conversation) and maintains the balance between individuality and sociability. In other words, the process of mediation guides the individual to decide which internal parts will be exposed to external response, and which part of the self will remain untouched and private. Through external conversation, the subject seeks to externalise the balance between her inner privacy and the external sociality which her present 'I' always tries to maintain.

The external conversation (vocalised speech/formed utterances) that the individual shares with other people constitutes the future 'You'. Peirce presents the future 'You' as potential future selves, in other words the potential appearance the self can present to the external environment. This presentation can only be achieved through external conversation, belonging to the future, since it is externalised only when internal conversation has been produced and the self has concluded the process of interpreting

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notion of an unconscious mental state implies accessibility to consciousness. We have no notion of the unconscious except as that which is potentially conscious' (1998: 152).



the internal conversation. Peirce believes that the future 'You' then moves down the time-line and assumes the position of the acting 'I'.

This can be represented by means of an example. Assume that a student has just heard from her lecturer that her essay is not very well structured and that she needs to rewrite it. The student may react as follows:

**T1: Student's Internal Conversation**

'ME': What is she talking about? I am travelling to London to see my girlfriend this weekend. There is no way I am going to write this essay again!

**T2: Student's Mediator**

'I': Try to be nice and polite, and find a good excuse to avoid redoing it.

**T3: Student's External Conversation**

'YOU': I understand that I have to improve the structure of my essay and that was one of my concerns about this module. Is there any chance that I can submit the essay after the weekend, because I will find it a bit difficult and confusing to change the whole essay within two days?

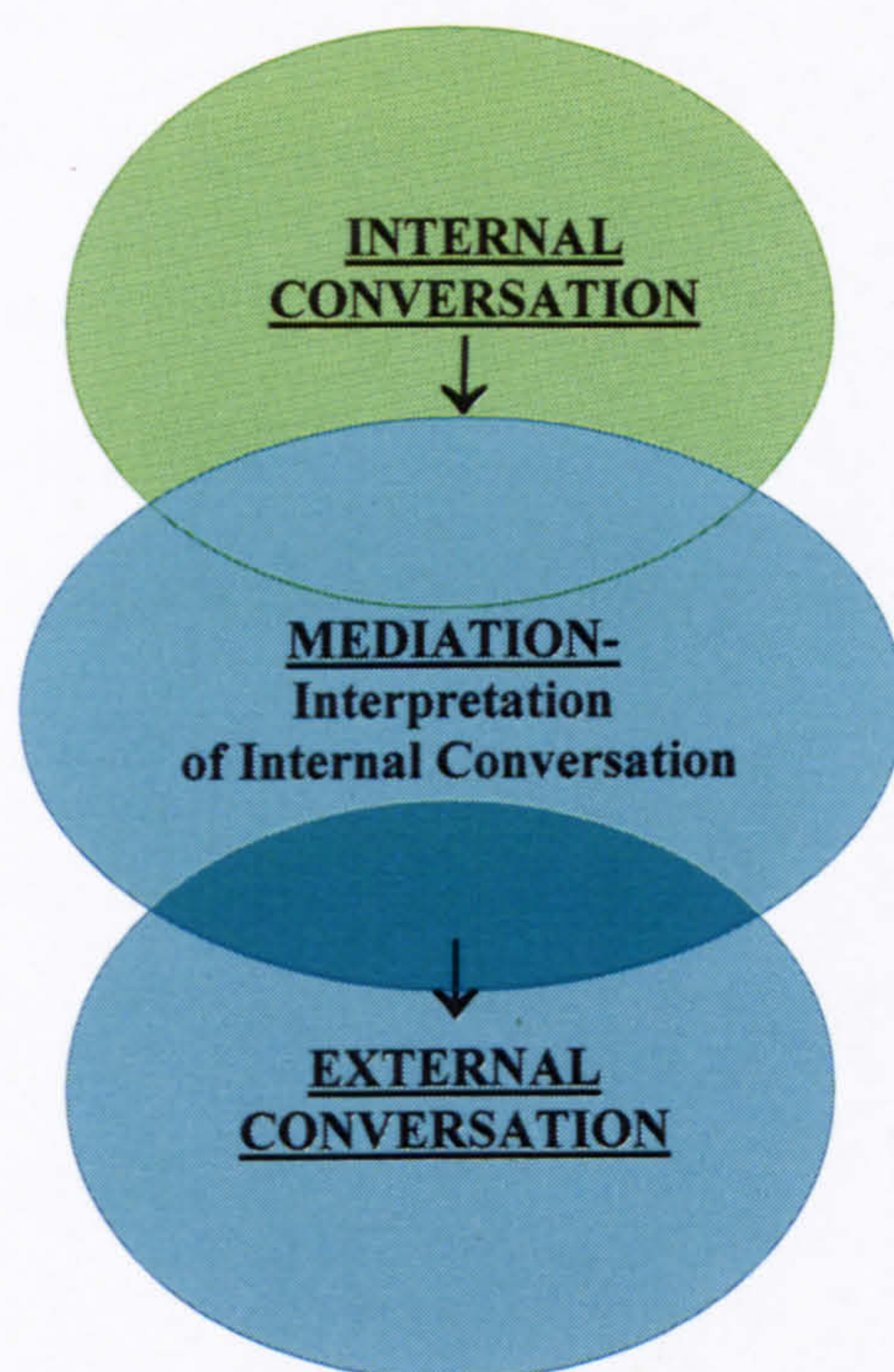
Here, the present 'I' has *mediated* between internal conversation (the past 'Me') and external conversation (the future 'You'); this can be understood as the *interpretation of internal conversation* that becomes external, or, in other words, the 'authorisation' the self gives itself in order for external conversation to be produced. This mediator can also be understood as the reformation of self-experiences, or the decision about which words should be used in the intended verbal utterance in order to externalise the thoughts.



Thus, the route my investigation follows to describe mediation departs from internal conversation, presents the interpretation of internal conversation as the mediation process and arrives at the expression of this interpretation in vocalised words, which are the external conversation. This can be represented by the following schemas:

Internal Conversation → Mediation → External Conversation

*and*



Having introduced the first aspect of the mediation process, namely the interpretative externalisation of internal conversation, I will now proceed to the second and complementary aspect, that is, the elucidation of external conversation.

#### 4.3.2: The common ground shared by External and Internal Conversation.

Everyday language users possess pragmatic knowledge about how language and conversation work, such as what the rules are, the standard ways of performing



speech acts and the extent of people's conversational goals (McLaughlin, 1984: 13-34). These expectations are conventional in the sense that they are shared amongst people from the same linguistic and sub-cultural groups. Thus, any person who wants to become a 'participant' in a conversation has to base his/her own behaviour on the rules of the language game in which he/she wishes to become involved<sup>24</sup>. Searle (1969) has argued that certain characteristics must be present in a speaker's utterance, beliefs and intentions (and also in the communicative situation) in order for that utterance to work properly as a promise, request, statement, warning or other speech act. According to Nofsinger (1991), one way of looking at such conventions is to regard them as a special type of rule that defines, creates or constitutes a speech act. It would be useful to examine whether these 'constitutive rules' regulate internal conversation as well as external conversation. If so, this would intimate that internal conversation is not an 'unidentified' element of sociological research. Instead, it could be argued that it constitutes an everyday phenomenon that everyone experiences, part of which each individual intends to externalise.

Searle (1969) proposes that the various speech acts employed in everyday life are defined (constituted) according to constitutive rules in the pragmatics of language. Constitutive rules are distinguished from regulative rules (i.e. rules that constrain when and where people might perform a particular act, e.g. greeting). Searle (1969) also presents the *conditions* that constitute the speech (illocutionary) act of *promising*. For an utterance to be interpreted as a promise (according to constitutive rules), it must be designed to refer to the future behaviour of the speaker. The conditions that form the speech act of promising are: 1) there must be sufficient reason for listeners to

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<sup>24</sup> Otherwise a person could be perceived as producing deviant behaviour or even being abnormal.

infer that the speaker believes he/she is able to undertake the future behaviour; 2) it must seem that the speaker thinks that the listener wants or is willing for the speaker's future behaviour to be carried out; 3) the speaker should intend to perform the future behaviour; and 4) there is a sufficient reason to infer that the speaker intends, by producing the utterance, to obligate him/herself to perform the indicated future behaviour. These conditions, of course, refer to the act of promising during external conversation; I shall now investigate whether similar conditions apply to internal conversation.

Here is a hypothetical example of an internal conversation in which the 'Me' is talking to the 'I'<sup>25</sup>:

A1: Oh my God, I've put on weight!

A2: I look like an elephant.

A3: I should go on a diet immediately!

A4: I never keep my mouth shut. I won't make it.

A5: OK, I have to promise this time! I have to be strong!

A6: *That's it! I will go on a diet right now. Enough is enough.*

In this scenario, A is about to make a promise to herself that she will begin a diet. In line 6, she produces an utterance that formulates that promise. I shall now determine whether A's promise fulfils Searle's conditions. The reason A has to convince herself that she is able to begin a diet is that she hates the fact that she has put on weight. She therefore has a good reason to produce different future behaviour. A makes it clear that she wants to go on a diet and that she intends – at least at that specific moment – to begin the diet (i.e. to change her behaviour) immediately. A seems determined to proceed with the diet and, therefore, to obligate herself to lose weight. It can thus be

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<sup>25</sup> For further analysis of the definition of 'Me' and 'I' see the Chapter 2, on American Pragmatism.



argued that the above internal conversation constitutes a promise A makes to herself; this promise has all the characteristics of an act of promise produced through external conversation.

As part of this research, I carried out several, purely exploratory interviews in order to investigate whether theoretical conclusions agreed with the actual views of randomly selected people<sup>26</sup>. Interviews included questions on constitutive rules. Eight out of ten people who were asked if they could give promises to themselves, internally, without letting other people know about it, answered positively. They perceived this procedure as natural and frequently occurring; they also believed that all people do the same. Only one respondent replied that he does not make promises internally or externally, and the tenth respondent did not consider this procedure to be part of internal conversation. Since the majority of respondents experience the procedure of making promises to themselves, this constitutive rule seems likely to apply to the everyday internal life of many people.

The second of Searle's conditions is the *request*. A request concerns the future behaviour of a recipient (listener), rather than that of the speaker. Thus, one difference between the speech acts, or requesting and promising, lies in the propositional content rule (again, following Searle, 1969: 64-71). One characteristic of a request is the fact that the speaker thinks the listener is able (and potentially willing) to undertake the requested behaviour. Furthermore, there must be a reason to suppose that the speaker believes that the listener would not ordinarily perform this act as a matter of course.

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<sup>26</sup> These interviews do not constitute an empirical part of my thesis, they are only explorative. Ten Greek students who live in UK have been interviewed, randomly selected around the age of 25. They had to be Greek since the questionnaire was also used for a further explorative study on the internalisation of a second language (for further discussion see Chalari 2007). These specific interviews were used for illustrative purposes only.

Finally, it has to be clear that the speaker wants the listener to perform this future behaviour. The following example of internal conversation illustrates the above characteristics:

A1: I think I should wear that dress

A2: No, it's too old. Everybody has seen it!

A3: Yes, but black suits me and it's the only black dress I have.  
Besides I hardly ever wear it.

A4: It's still old.

A5: I can wear it for the last time and then I'll see what to do

A6: What if I buy a new one?

A7: Oh, come on! *Have done with it and just wear that dress.*

A8: OK, OK!

In this example, A is trying to decide what to wear. A believes she should wear a black dress, but she also believes that her dress is too old. However, she does not have a better one, so she makes her life difficult. Thus, she makes a 'request' (as a speaker) to herself (as a listener) to wear that particular dress. A does not wear that dress often and she has to convince herself to wear it now despite the fact that it is old. It is obvious that she wants to make herself wear it, and this is why the request in line 7 is so strict. A thus produces a request internally to herself; therefore, a request is a condition that also applies to internal conversation.

Nine out of ten participants who took part in the exploratory interviews replied positively when asked if they received requests from themselves. Only one person did not recognise this internal procedure. The remaining participants were familiar with the process of internal requests and believed that everyone experiences analogous internal processes.



A's 'promise' to do something that it is not wanted by the recipient could be interpreted as a *threat*. In a threat, a speaker intends to perform a specific future behaviour and is obliged to do it. Participants can see that the speaker believes the future behaviour would be harmful to the recipient. The following example represents a threat which is produced during internal conversation:

A1: Oh no! The toilet is blocked!

A2: It smells awful, I have to do something

A3: I have to call the plumber.

A4: Ah! The water is leaking! I'm in trouble!

A5: I have to put my hand in and unblock it!!

A6: I'd better call the plumber..

A7: *Unblock it now or your house will be like a dirty sewer!!!*

A8: Ugh...

In this example, A is faced with the need to carry out an unpleasant task. A (as speaker) has the intention and the obligation to unblock the toilet. At the same time, however, she knows that carrying out this future action will be distasteful to herself, but she forces herself to the task by visualising the consequences of inaction.

In the exploratory interviews, respondents were not confident about the process of threatening. Six out of ten participants said that they sometimes threatened themselves internally, while two of them said that they never felt the need to threaten themselves and another two said they had not paid sufficient attention to this kind of experience to be able to comment. It would seem that internal threatening is not easily recognisable, and people who do not realise the exact meaning of this process might not be able to detect it. However, the majority of participants were able to recognise this internal practice. It should be noted that threatening does not often occur in

external conversation either, and this may be the reason that people do not regularly experience this feeling internally.

*Offer* involves articulation of the speaker's intention to perform some future behaviour for the listener in a way that indicates that the speaker really has the intention to carry it out and, if the offer is accepted, has the obligation to do it. As Archer (2003: 96-102) argues, internal conversations involve the recall and repetition of external conversations we or others produce. Thus, someone may make us an offer which we recall during an internal conversation and we decide whether or not to accept. Therefore, even the act of an offer may appear in internal conversation. In the same way, it could be proposed that other conditions that occur in external conversations may also appear in internal ones, as individuals recall these and try to reach decisions. These include:

1. *Commands*. These are requests made in circumstances in which the speaker has some power over the speaker: most of the participants of the interviews stated that they sometimes command themselves.
2. *Greetings*. It may seem impossible that an individual could say 'hi' to herself, although she may re-live other people's greetings to her<sup>27</sup>. However, there are rare instances of self-greeting, such as saying 'Happy Birthday' to oneself as one wakes up on that particular day.
3. *Compliments*. Here, the speaker appears genuinely to like something the listener has done and to articulate this as a compliment. When participants in the exploratory interviews were asked if they complimented themselves, only

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<sup>27</sup> CA deems it significant how people 'open' or begin a conversation (e.g. greetings) and how they close one. It can be argued that this is not the case with internal conversation since the individual can open and close any conversation in any way at any time. Internally, an individual could 'behave verbally' in a 'freer' way as Simmel might say.



a few responded positively. The others explained that they felt satisfaction when they achieved something good, but they would not necessarily compliment themselves.

To summarise, speech acts are actions within conversations. They are created by a system of pragmatic language conventions, known as constitutive rules. Participants use these constitutive rules to interpret conversational utterances as certain forms of speech acts. Participants also 'design' their utterances in compliance with the above rules. Therefore, it can be argued constitutive rules are not merely a characteristic of external (verbal, expressed, social, interactional) conversation but also one that regulates internal conversation.

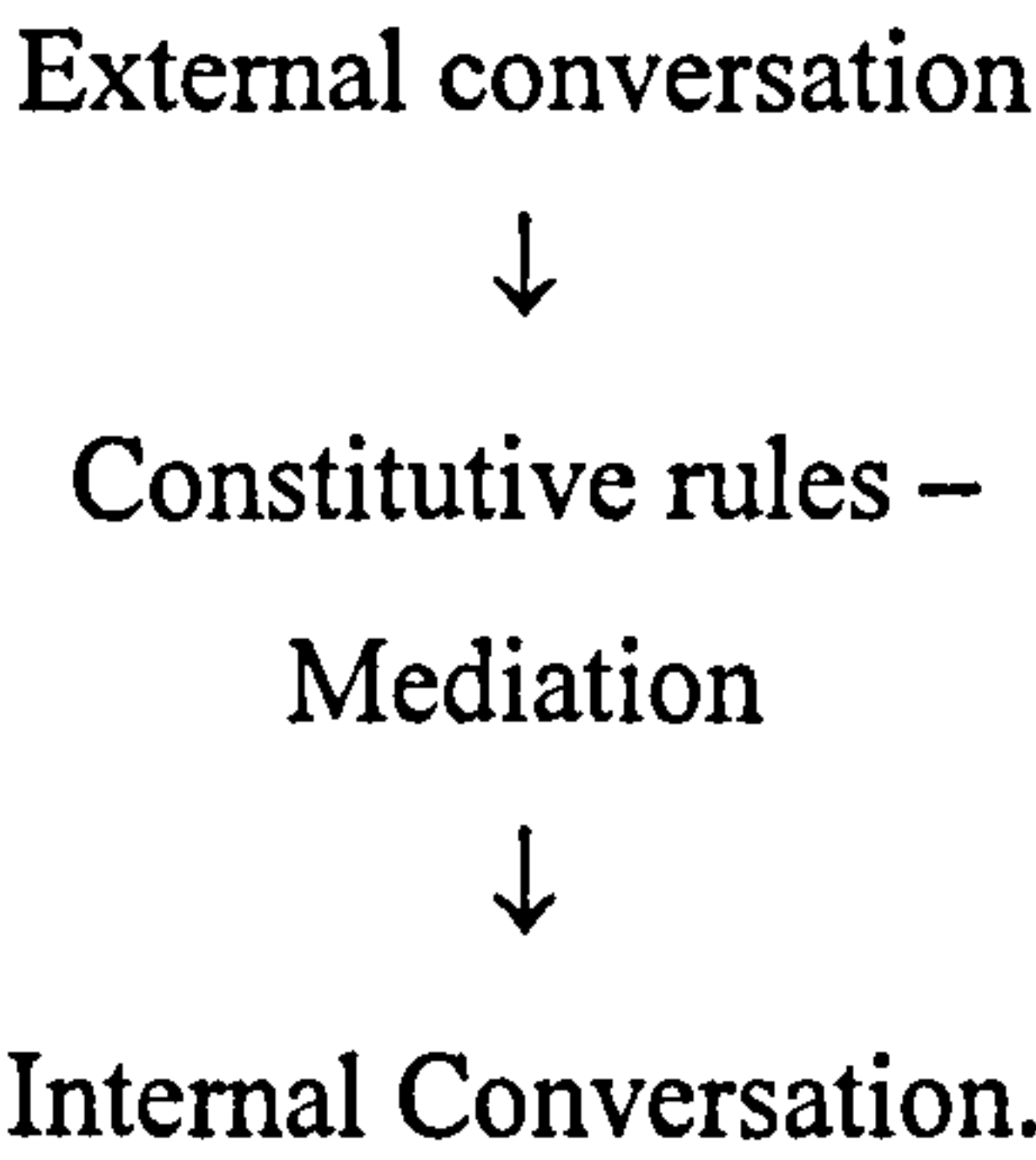
Peirce introduced the issue of internal conversation in terms of the life of the mind. For him, thinking always proceeds in the form of a dialogue and all thinking is dialogical in form<sup>28</sup>. He suggests that, if thought is really conversation, then it must employ language and logic, which are public media. Peirce also believes that our inner lives are not dominated by our sociality. Instead, the life of the mind retains relative autonomy, with relatively autonomous properties and powers. To Peirce, we are not mute, but internally vocal and conversational exercising our reflexivity (Archer, 2003: 67). As Peirce states, public language(s) (i.e. external conversation) is/are indispensable for the emergence of the private inner word. What becomes apparent from the approach of CA, and from the Peircian understanding of internal and external conversation, is that they are two different aspects of conversation which co-exist and co-operate, and that they constitute the connection between the

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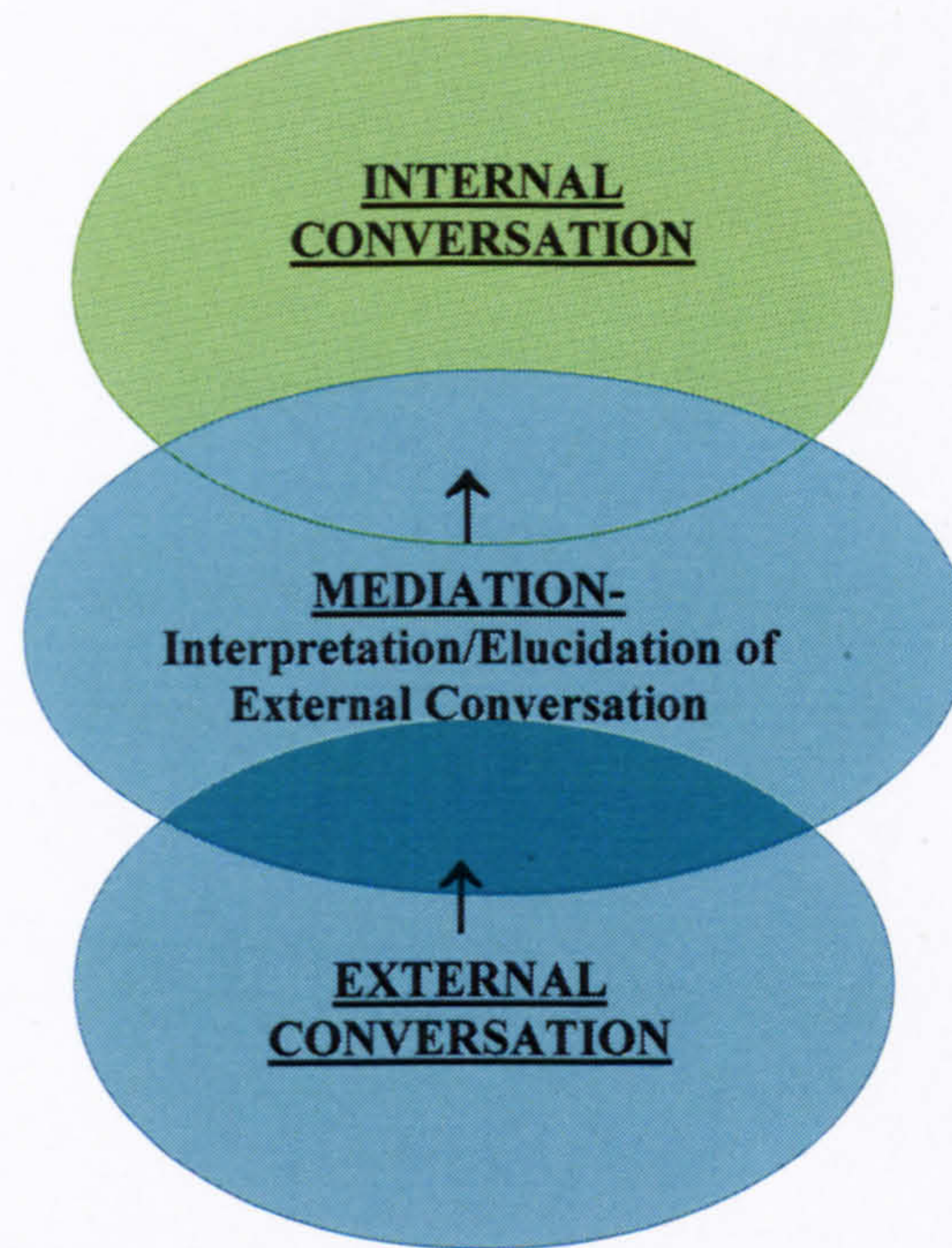
<sup>28</sup> For further discussion on Peirce, see Chapter 2.

individual’s inner life and interaction with other individuals. Thus, the constitutive rules are used by individuals through internal conversation to formulate the utterances externalised by the individual. As I have suggested, such utterances involve interpretations or elucidations and form the first stage of mediation between internal and external conversation.

As I hope to have shown, internal conversation consists, amongst other things, of the same constitutive rules. This takes us to the mediation process that occurs between internal and external conversation. This time, however, a different route is being accentuated: the mediation process as one that entails interpretations/elucidations of external conversation with the subject in the role of the listener. What I have already suggested (section 4.3.1) is that the first process of mediation involves the interpretation of internal conversation. What I am now proposing is that the mediation process entails the elucidation of external conversation. In both cases, the conclusion remains the same: there is a process that mediates between internal and external conversation and is responsible for what the individual expresses verbally and for what she takes from the utterances of others. This latter point can be demonstrated by the schema and diagram shown below:







#### 4.4: Discussion.

In this chapter, I have attempted to address the notion of internal conversation through the lens of CA. First, I analysed Vygotsky's views on inner speech and discussed certain specific characteristics of inner speech that he identifies (e.g. subject omission, contextual dependence, short utterances). I then presented the sociological method of CA and discussed its approach to everyday conversation. I then argued that action sequences, as a fundamental design participants use to construct external conversation, are also used within internal conversation, including adjacency pairs. I identified turn-taking organisation, the fundamental pattern of interpersonal conversation, as forming the basic component of internal conversation too. Although there is no scientific tool (as yet) for the empirical investigation of internal conversation, this does not mean that inner dialogue does not operate, or that it does



not have very similar characteristics to the analogous external procedures that an individual demonstrates when she interacts with other people. Thus far, the emphasis of my investigation has been on the interplay between internal and external conversation, according to methods derived from CA. I proposed that internal and external conversations share common ground, and that they are formed according to analogous patterns which does not preclude their also having significant differences.

In the second part of this chapter, I discussed the process of mediation between internal and external conversation, which was seen as feasible because of the methodological tools that CA had made available. I approached the process of mediation from two different angles. First, I tried to examine the mediation process in relation to internal conversation, offering mediation as a procedure through which internal conversation could be interpreted by the subject for external locution. Thus, the individual first undertakes internal conversations and, through the mediation process, the interpretation of the individual's conversation is achieved, such that it is capable of externalisation through vocalising it. I then analysed external conversation and its constitutive rules and attempted to assess the applicability of these rules to internal conversation. The mediation procedure in this section was described as the elucidation of external conversation.

I have argued that the mediation process between internal and external conversation can be approached from both directions (internally and externally). This is because the relationship between internal and external conversation appears to be twofold. Indeed in some cases, the actual core of mediation can be approached from both directions simultaneously. This offers two different means of access/entrance to the



investigation of the actual point where internal and external conversation meet, and their potential relationship. On this basis I will later advance a systematic approach to the understanding of the process of mediation.

In this work, I propose that adult external conversation derives from internal conversation<sup>29</sup> and, according to what we choose to externalise (through mediation), we produce our external conversations. Conversely, proponents of CA state that external conversation should be analysed in order to better understand the actions that these conversations represent, and posit that the basis of conversation is language (i.e. grammar and syntax)<sup>30</sup>. A conflict arises if we attempt to combine these views: if external conversation indeed derives from internal conversation, then internal conversation should have the same syntactical and grammatical structure as external conversation. I argue that, although there is a significant degree of similarity between the CA elements of internal and external conversation, there are also substantial differences. For example, if someone wants to ask for a glass of water politely she does not have to internally form the full sentence. It is enough to imagine a glass of water and then ask for it. Apparently, no internal grammar or syntax is involved in this case. Furthermore, people who speak two languages sometimes think internally in one language and externalise their conversation in the other language. The languages used may have a different grammar and syntax.

I am not arguing that that grammar and syntax are not essential for the formation of internal conversation; external conversation is clearly based on such formulae.

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<sup>29</sup> I have by now repeated this proposition several times, but it is important to stress that in this thesis I am exclusively concerned with the conversations, internal and external, as conducted by adults and never with issues of language in child development.

<sup>30</sup> Numerous linguists, such as Chomsky, socio-linguists and psycho-linguists would agree with them.

However, as Vygotsky states, internal conversation does not necessarily use the same syntactical patterns. If we pursue the line, with CA and with linguists, that language is based on grammatical and syntactical patterns, and that conversation (as action) derives from such patterns and pre-formed structures, it is not hard to discern that such a view is incomplete. If that were the case, then the way we form our internal conversation would be exactly the same as the way we form external conversation. However, when we produce internal conversation, we do not carefully use the correct order for subjects, objects and verbs, and we do not necessarily pay attention to verb tenses, etc. External conversation thus derives from a freer structural environment than grammar and syntax, which I, following Archer and Wiley, propose to be internal conversation, with its ellipsis, absence of the subject, incorporation of visual imagery, emotional content and visceral sensations. Above all, the internal conversation is distinctive in being contextually dependent. This makes it leaner and faster but, because the precise meaning of its contextual referents are known to the subject alone, a crucial difference between a person's conversation with herself and with others is signalled. If only because of the differences just listed between internal and external conversation, a process mediating from one form of dialogue to the other is necessitated. As will be seen however, this is far from being the only task of the mediation process.



## CHAPTER 5

### Introducing Mediation.

#### 5: Prolegomena.

In the following chapters of the present thesis, I shall examine the notion of mediation. I shall first recap the main points discussed so far, relating both to internal and external conversation and to mediation. I shall introduce both the theoretical concept of mediation and the stages of mediation in a diagram. Finally, I will analytically discuss the first stage of mediation<sup>1</sup>.

#### 5.1: What is Mediation.

I shall begin by explaining mediation in general terms. Mediation describes the relationship between internal and external conversation. In other words, the inner cosmos of the individual and the interaction the individual has with herself are constantly related to the external environment. I suggest that this relationship is formed according to specific phases and operations, and that it constitutes an ‘agential filter’<sup>2</sup> comprised of certain stages that enable the individual to relate her internal and external conversations. More specifically, I propose that:

*Mediation is the dialogical process that enables the individual to achieve a subjectively-defined degree of ‘inner balance’ between her inner and external world, which is satisfactory to her.*

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<sup>1</sup> The terms to be used throughout the remainder of this work derive from terminology explored in earlier chapters.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term ‘filter’ as a metaphor to describe a dialogical process that only humans are able to exercise

I shall explain the main terms used in this definition in depth below, but here I shall provide a summary interpretation of the proposed definition. My use of the term *dialogical* follows Peirce's and Wiley's interpretation that the dialogic form of inner life can also entail icons, signs, representations or memories which are not necessarily couched in language. The term *subjectively defined* underlines the importance of each individual's uniqueness and the subjective understanding that each individual has of the social and personal world. I use '*inner balance*' according to Simmel's interpretation; it should not be associated with any kind of objective equilibration, but rather with a subjectively defined understanding of 'balance'. My definition uses the possessive (*her*) deliberately: an individual does not know everything about the external world, but needs to find a way to live with it; she therefore interacts with a specific part of the external world (i.e., *her* external world) rather than the world in general (i.e., *the* external world)<sup>3</sup>. Finally, the term *satisfactory* refers to what the individual can live with, or, all things considered and situated, as she is.

Individuals produce internal conversations in order to deliberate reflexively upon themselves and society; it has further been suggested that external conversation is the outcome of such a process. Individuals externalise their internal conversations in different ways, although their reasons for doing so may be similar. This means that each adult individual evaluates external situations in different ways and responds accordingly. Adults have the ability to determine which reaction, action or external conversation is most appropriate to any given occasion. I propose that individuals are not simply passive agents to whom things merely happen, but that they can choose what to say and how to respond. External conversation derives from internal

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<sup>3</sup> This concept will explained more fully in section 6.3.1.



conversation which in turn is developed within a state of inner freedom. This means that external conversation is connected with internal conversation in a way that might differ dramatically between individuals.

Mediation is a process that helps the individual to decide what part of her internal dialogues to keep unspoken and what part of her internal conversations to externalise and thus transform into external conversation. This process can be understood as the ability each individual has to filter what she thinks before she speaks. Simultaneously, it can be understood as the process that helps the individual to understand what she sees, hears, feels, senses, etc. Individuals do not internalise whatever they receive in the same way, but use a filter to help them decide what to internalise and what not to. This process receives external conversations and decides which of them will become topics of internal conversations, to what extent and in what form. The process of mediation should, therefore, not be confused with developmental approaches and aspects.

Mediation thus describes the dialogical relationship between internal and external conversation. This is a separate process which intervenes between internal conversation (that is, all the inner dialogical processes that each individual keeps unspoken) and external conversation (the part of internal conversation the individual chooses to externalise). There is an interplay between internal and external conversation, and mediation is the process that connects these two different aspects of each individual, the filter that helps the individual to internalise and externalise her external and internal conversations. In order to do this, certain specific functions are involved and a more detailed form of filtering may take place. In fact, mediation is a mechanism responsible for maintaining a 'balanced' relationship between internal and

external conversation; in order to do that, a series of tasks and specific stages is involved.

The concept of mediation derives from Archer's work and is based on notions of internal conversation and reflexive deliberation. As Archer states, individuals reflexively deliberate upon themselves and society through internal conversation; individuals make their way through the world by exercising their ability to be reflexive about themselves and society. Mediation is not synonymous with reflexivity: rather, *it is the process that enables the individual to be reflexive, the process through which reflexivity is achieved*. In the present work, I discuss the stages individuals encounter in order to make their way through life and propose that internal conversation becomes external when individuals choose to filter their internal conversations through the stages which comprise mediation. Reflexivity, conversely, refers to the general and wider agential power and property individuals exercise in order to 'consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa' (Archer, 2007: 4). Mediation is precisely the process that makes this 'consideration' possible; in other words, it is the mechanism (and its components) that supports the whole process of reflexivity.

I shall present mediation in the form of a mechanism; this means that, while mediation is a constant ongoing process that consists of certain stages, it has nothing to do with any other form of mechanism, such as rational choice theory. Mediation is an agential property which should be understood as *the filter an individual places*



*between herself and society rather than any kind of filter or process that society places between itself and the individual<sup>4</sup>.*

### 5.2: The Emergence of Mediation.

Earlier, I attempted to identify what social theory and psychology have offered to the understanding of internal and external conversation. It became apparent that in certain ways both disciplines have developed a wide variety of methods to address what I term external conversation. During the last century, sociologists in particular have studied external conversation extensively and analytically and, in the context of a scientific discipline, have tried to embrace every aspect of social reality. It would be impossible to include or even mention all relevant theories concerning external conversation here, so I have discussed solely studies of external conversation that could also be related to internal conversation, thus referring to the work of Simmel, Goffman and the American Pragmatists, progressing to Vygotsky, Bourdieu and Giddens, and finally to Wiley and Archer. I offered some useful conclusions derived from the approach of internal conversation through Conversation Analysis (CA). In the next section of the present chapter, I will try to combine the elements, as discussed in the previous chapters, that are considered important for the understanding of the relationship between internal and external conversation. Thus I will attempt to define the circle that people negotiate when an interplay between internal and external

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<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the mediation mechanism is not capable of processing specific internal and external conversations; on such occasions no degree of balance can be achieved. Although I shall make reference to these occasions, it should be noted that there are some cases in which mediation may not, in fact, be capable of achieving the desired balance and thus the interplay between internal and external conversation might not reach a conclusion. However, such cases may be linked with pathological conditions and, as I have previously stated, thus lie beyond the scope of the present work.

conversation occurs. In later sections, I will suggest how the mediation process may be approached.

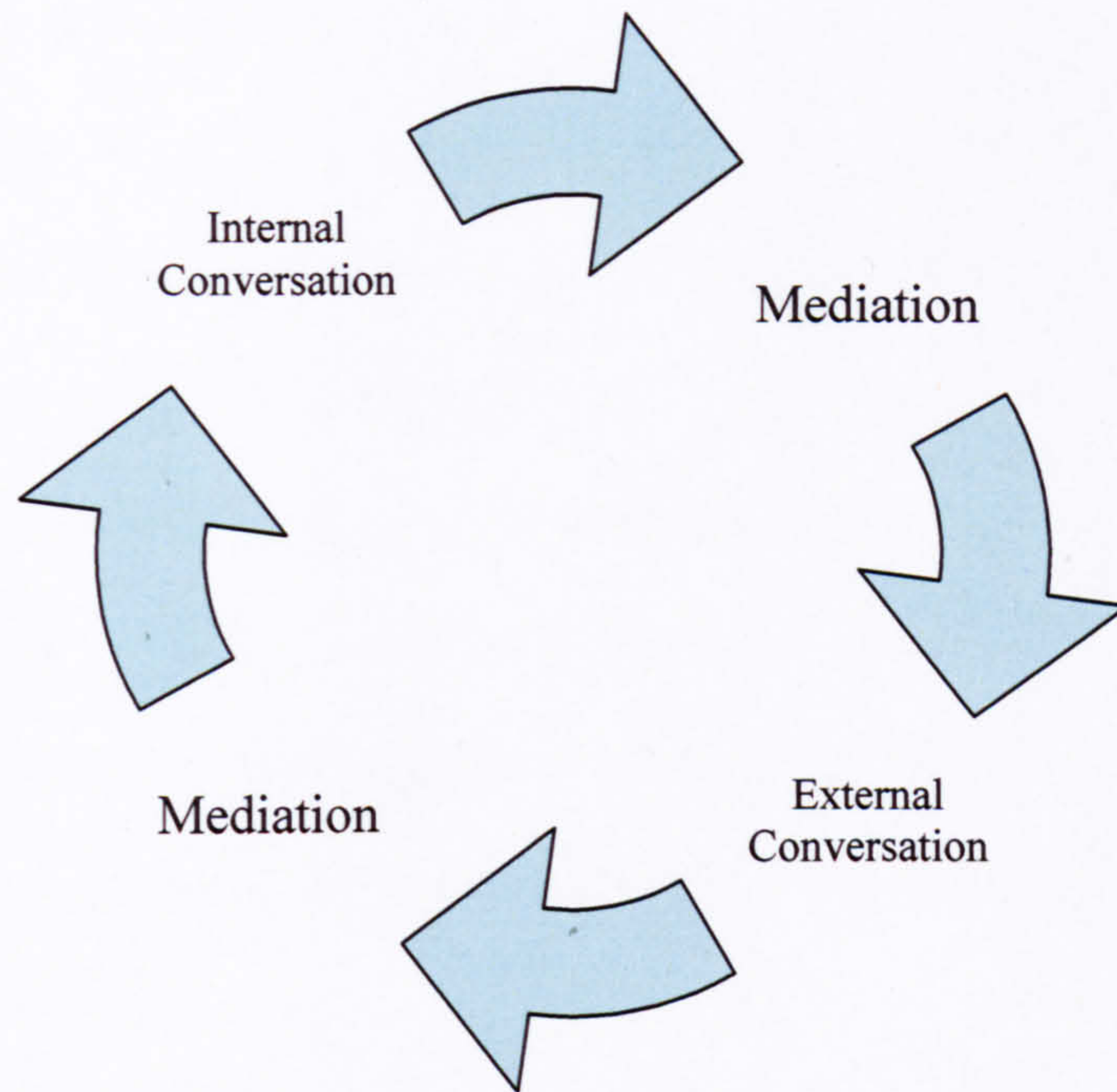
### 5.2.1: The relationship between Internal and External Conversation according to Social Theory and Psychology.

In order to compose a synthesised picture consisting of elements from different and unrelated sources, I must first offer some clarifications:

- The model I propose to create through the abovementioned synthesis derives from my understanding and interpretation of specific sociological and psychological studies, theories and views. The components presented in the model and discussion do not constitute a direct interpretation of any theorist's views or contributions. Rather, they present a suggested understanding of each theorist's views.
- The components of the proposed model constitute separate and diverse views of different and unrelated theorists, but I shall attempt to present their theories and studies in a non-contradictory way. To date, none of these disparate theorists has developed a view specifically intended to fit to such a model.

The circle that each individual experiences when she is involved in interplay between internal and external conversation can be demonstrated as follows:





In this representation, it can be seen that there is a separate process between internal and external conversation which mediates before internal conversation becomes external conversation, and before external conversation becomes internal conversation. In other words, this is the basic pattern according to which the individual interacts with her external environment. The stages involved in each person's interaction with herself and the external environment may take the form of this circle. However, this circle can end at any time; it does not have to be completed every time, and stages can be repeated or omitted.

Each of these stages has been discussed earlier in this work, together with the ideas specific theorists have contributed to the understanding of each of these stages or phenomena. I will now describe each phase according to my understanding of the theorists' views, referring to each solely in relation to his or her contribution to my conceptualization of mediation.



## INTERNAL CONVERSATION

- A synthesized view of American Pragmatism might suggest that internal conversation constitutes the inner dialogue between 'I' and 'You', as proposed by Peirce. For him, the individual's identity derives from this inner conversation; Dewey would add that the inner freedom of the individual is an undeniable state that each individual experiences during private inner speech.
- Vygotsky perceives inner speech as a function that helps the individual to internalise the social world and make sense of it. Vygotsky relates inner speech to thought and meaning.
- Vocate, following Vygotsky, understands internal conversation as intrapersonal communication.
- For Wiley, internal conversation comprises a combination of Peirce's and Mead's views. Wiley suggests that 'I' (present) leads to 'You' (future) which derives from 'Me' (past). Following Peirce's analysis, he proposes that internal conversation also possesses non-linguistic elements which can be understood only by each individual during her internal conversation.
- Archer maintains that internal conversation constitutes the source of every external conversation and is an irreducible individual property with causal powers. For Archer, internal conversation is directly connected to reflexive deliberation which it is held here to form the basis of the mediation process.

## MEDIATION

- Through pragmatism, mediation can be equated to the Jamesian 'Me' which transfers messages from the internal to external world and *vice versa*. Mediation is not



an area defined by pragmatists, but it might be suggested that they regard it as an integral part of the internal dialogue.

- Vygotsky's views on mediation can be understood as the internalisation of the external world. Although Vygotsky did not study mediation *per se*, he recognised the need for and ability of the individual to internalise her external environment and to respond to it.
- Vocate expanded Vygotsky's understanding of inner speech and proposed the term 'intrapersonal communication'. This might be viewed as a possible mediation process, since she discusses the concept of encoding thought into language or decoding received language into meaning.
- The most important definition and comprehensive understanding of mediation derives from Archer's perception of reflexive deliberation. For Archer, what I am calling mediation is effectively the link between internal and external conversation which she defines as the ability every individual has to be reflexive. Archer defines four dominant modes of reflexivity, which were empirically found to occur in equal measure: 1) communicative reflexivity, 2) autonomous reflexivity, 3) meta-reflexivity and 4) fractured reflexivity; the first three of these are practised by all normal people in their everyday lives.
- CA has guided me to formulate the argument that mediation constitutes the processes of elucidation of internal conversation and the interpretation of external conversation. In the context of CA methodology, I have also proposed the internalisation of external conversation and the externalisation of internal conversation as being the two central elements of mediation.

## EXTERNAL CONVERSATION

- External conversation might be equated, in Goffmanian terms, to the ‘roles’ individuals perform, or the ‘scenarios’ that people are ‘supposed’ to follow in their everyday lives.
- It could be argued that American Pragmatism understands external conversation through the Meadian concept of the ‘generalised other’ and through Dewey’s conception of how dramatically culture influences the individual.
- For Bourdieu, individuals incorporate internalised schemes through which they understand, perceive, evaluate and appreciate the social world. Bourdieu conceptualises this process as taking place through habitus. Thus it could be suggested that Bourdieu’s habitus shapes external conversation.
- Analogously, Giddens believes that structure exists in and through the activities of human agents and that action could be synonymous with agency. Therefore, it could be implied that, for Giddens, external conversation cannot be too far removed from internal conversation, precisely because they both depend upon and need to draw from structure.
- Archer, however, perceives external conversation as the outcome of internal conversation and reflection, and she relates external conversation with the exercise of human agency although this is not a necessarily connection. She explains that we cannot have external conversation without internal conversation; however, we can have internal conversation without this necessarily being externalised.

Thus far I have tried to assemble and connect the relevant points concerning the suggested circle (interplay between internal and external conversation) discussed in earlier chapters, and have shown how each stage of the proposed circle could be



viewed through different approaches to the overall task. I will attempt to try and use the views discussed above in order to reach a synthesised understanding of the interplay between internal and external conversation and all the stages that are involved in this process. The following example serves as clarification:

**Hypothesised internal conversation** of a woman (A) who has allowed another person (B) to stay in her house for a couple of days; however, B has taken advantage of her hospitality.

A1: How can I tell this woman that she must stop treating me in this way?

A2: She has moved into my house for a few days, and she acts as if she is a queen and I should be her slave. Just because I want to be pleasant, does not mean that she can take advantage of me! She doesn't even contribute to any of the expenses or the housework.

A3: I feel so stupid, letting a person like her take advantage of my hospitality and good will.

A4: I need to find a way to let her know that I do not feel comfortable with her attitude.

A5: But I feel awful when I hurt someone's feelings. I could never say that directly to her. I need to find another way.

**Hypothesised external conversation** between A and B as A tries to explain her views:

A1: Oh, I feel very tired of washing the plates today.

B1: Uhuh...

A2: I wash them every day!

B2: This is what I hate doing in my house too. I can understand you! I know how it feels.

A3: Really? Thank you!

B3: Sure! I wish I could help you, but I have to go now. I will see you later.

The mediation mechanism has not yet been presented since it constitutes a process that can be approached and studied only after the completion of each interplay; we do not know in advance how mediation will operate in each case. However, after the completion of the interplay we can re-live the episode and hear ourselves and assess how we connected our internal with our external conversation. In the example above, it can be seen that A's internal conversation has to do with the way B makes her feel. Thus, I suggest that this specific internal conversation involves the internalisation of an external conversation or behaviour or action (following Vygotsky and Vocate), the interpretation of this specific external conversation (following CA), and the evaluation of and reflection upon this external stimulus (following Archer). This internal conversation also provides a format for planning a future external conversation, what A wants to say to B (a way of reflection); at the same time, non-linguistic elements are involved (negative feelings, icons or memories of the other person's negative behaviour, etc., in Wiley's terms). It is simultaneously apparent that 'I' is talking to 'You' in a free and confident way (in Pragmatist terms) and part of the person's identity is thus revealed (following Peirce).

Having combined the ways that internal conversation can be examined, we can consider the function of mediation through synthesizing these elements. Thus, I suggest that mediation operates as the process that transfers a message from internal to external conversation (according to the James) and as the processes of internalisation (Vygotsky), and as the process of encoding and decoding (Vocate). Above all, we can see the individual's ability to undertake reflexive deliberation (Archer) in A's argument with herself about a specific issue. Finally, it is also evident that, as A produces her internal conversation, she also elucidates what she is saying to



herself (i.e., when she explains to herself why she feels so stupid and uncomfortable). Elucidation of internal conversation and interpretation of external conversation are two processes that derive from the methodology of CA. Therefore, the example given above can be seen to demonstrate that the suggested synthesised elements chosen to describe mediation appear to coexist and interrelate in a collaborative way.

With regards to A's external conversation with B in this example, the first thing that we need to note is the fact that it derives directly from A's internal conversation. A tries, indirectly, to let B know that she wishes her to help with the washing up; at the same time, A expects B to display appreciation, understanding and recognition of A's efforts. Thus, it may be seen that the discussion between A and B is formed according to what Mead terms the 'generalised other', or according to the influence of culture (since neither of the interactants says what she actually believes, but rather attempts to avoid a potential conflict; it could simply be said that A is trying to make B do what she wants). Elements of habitus and structuration theory can also be seen, since the action by which external conversation is displayed has a central role in the understanding of each social agent's intentions. A and B may not necessarily follow social norms and their actions may not result in a specific outcome. At the same time, both individuals have expectations and have set a goal, but only one of them has reached it. Finally, the link between internal and external conversation is apparent, although the actual content is completely different. As Archer might conclude, this specific external conversation is derived from a specific internal conversation and a process of reflection. The views offered by different theories and studies can once again be seen to coexist and cooperate harmoniously in a synthesised understanding of the suggested circle.

However, a further point needs consideration. This example began with the description of an internal conversation, which derived from an external stimulus, i.e. another person's behaviour. Theorists, such as Goffman, Mead, Dewey, Bourdieu and Giddens, might say that their particular view of the individual is in fact accurate: while there might be a process, such as internal conversation or mediation, the initial reason that these processes are activated is because of an external, social stimulus. Thus, the individual processes what the social environment offers. However, this is not the case because, since this specific stimulus was indeed external (although many other stimuli are internal), it was the individual who allowed it to be internalised, evaluated and processed in a unique way. All individuals react to social stimuli and, when they react, that they do not react in the same way to an identical stimulus. This is what makes every individual unique, even if all individuals interact within the same social environment.

### 5.2.2: Mediation according to Social Theory and Psychology.

In this section, I will attempt to present mediation according to approaches discussed earlier, namely social theory and psychology. The final model of mediation that I propose will be displayed later in this chapter; here, I collect and describe all relevant elements and approaches discussed in the first part of this work:

#### MEDIATION:

- Although Goffman and Simmel hold different views of the individual, the idea of the synthesis (in terms of compromise) of the antithetical social and private elements



was introduced through their theories. Simmel underlines the importance of synthesis between the social and private aspects of the individual, while Goffman upholds the importance of balance between the individual and the society. According to Simmel, only when the individual finds herself in this state can she develop and evolve. Simmel also reveals the potential strength of conflict between the inner and the social cosmos of the individual. In a state of **conflict**, an ongoing struggle takes place which the person involved tries to find a desired **balance**. Conversely, through his perception of roles, Goffman has indirectly guided my research towards the orientation of **hierarchies** (which, as used in the present work, divide into personal and social). As Goffman conceptualizes human action, through the performance of roles, the element of a hierarchical inner system can be uncovered, in terms of performing various roles more or less successfully. All of the above isolated, and not necessarily related, aspects of these theorists' approaches can be combined in a way that creates a new view of mediation. Above all, however, Goffman's idea of the '**go-between**' has inspired me to comprehend mediation as a **subjective** and not an objective process of deliberation.

- Vygotsky and (chronologically much later) Vocate attempt to relate the external world with inner speech through the individual's capacity to **internalise** external conversation and to **externalise** internal conversation (or, in Vocate's terms, to decode and encode). It will be seen that internalisation and externalisation are the first stages of mediation.
- CA provides useful tools for the exploration of the mediation process. I proposed that internal conversation is analogous to external conversation's turn-taking organisation, and described mediation as the **interpretation** of internal conversation

or the **elucidation** of external conversation. CA provides a concrete means to explore an abstract notion and to process it as mediation.

An example will help us understand how those approaches can coexist and work cooperatively. Let us consider a woman (A) who faces problems within her relationship and tries to devise a way to solve these.

**Hypothesised internal conversation of a woman:**

A1: Bill is a really good person and I know that he cares about me. When he gets angry though, he loses control.

A2: He thinks that when he is angry he has the right to say whatever comes into his head!

A3: He cannot call me names and accuse me of everything! Why is it my fault that he was fired? Why am I to blame?

A4: I need to do something. I have to talk to someone.

A5: It would be a good idea to see a psychotherapist. I can trust a specialist and I've heard that some of them are really good.

A6: Oh, but if he finds out he will be furious! He lost his job and here I am thinking of spending money on buying a couple of conversations. He would be very angry.

A7: But I cannot take his irrational accusations any more; I need to do something.

A8: Maybe I should divorce him?

A9: Oh come on! You cannot run away just because he shouted a couple of times! Everybody gets angry! Besides, everyone will think that I am a loser and that my marriage is a disaster.

A10: Why is this so frustrating? Why can't I just tell him to stop? What? Am I serious? I want to get out of this house in one piece!!

A11: Then maybe I can be patient and understanding. Maybe he will understand his mistakes. He really is a good man.



**Hypothesised external conversation of the woman:** A says nothing to her husband at this point about his behaviour.

In this internal conversation we can see the turn-taking organisation which, while involving only one person, is similar to external conversation's turn-taking organisation. Here, A tries to interpret and make sense of an external conversation that she has had with her husband. She elucidates (in CA terms) her internal conversation by rejecting options that she offers to herself. It can also be seen that there is a conflict (following Goffman) between what A wants and what she gets. There is an additional conflict concerning her ability to externalise (Vocate) what she feels to her husband; although she wants to tell him to stop, she feels unable to do so. Furthermore, as A tries to find a solution to her concerns she attempts to achieve a synthesis (Simmel) of what she wants to do and what she can do. She tries to find a balance between what she believes she must do and how her husband will respond. Thus, she is looking for the ideal solution. Apparently, A tries to convince herself to make a decision; however, she refuses to do that and she cannot therefore find the balance between her inner and her social/external (her husband and family) spheres. Therefore, she is unable to develop her marital relationship further, since she cannot achieve the desired balance (Simmel). Finally (as Archer would note), A produces reflexive deliberations upon her concerns and, through her attempt to resolve her problems, she actually acts in terms of her reflexive conclusions.

This example clarifies how some of the suggested characteristics of mediation mechanism actually coexist and cooperate. Each element taken from a theorist's view and from CA methodology can be combined into the suggested functions of

mediation. It can be seen, then, that in our everyday lives we produce internal conversations (some or part of which may become external) which are ‘guided’, ‘formed’ or ‘inspired’ by specific elements, guidelines or dimensions that are shaped by what I define as the ‘mediation mechanism’.

All the above functions will be combined in a synthesised diagram later in this chapter; at this point it is important to present how these functions can be combined. Having presented most of the elements, derived from the first part of this work, which this research will be using to address mediation, we can now proceed to an integrated understanding of how mediation is related first with external conversation and then with internal conversation.

### 5.3: The Process of Mediation.

Before introducing the components of mediation, I should reiterate that individuals are not knowledgeable about every aspect of the external world. However, people try to make sense of the external world and to achieve a degree of balance, although they may be ignorant of the way ‘it works’ (e.g., an individual might not be aware of the financial rationale concerning currency flows and exchanges, but she uses money readily in her everyday life). Individuals internalise particular aspects of the external world in particularistic ways; the next section will explain what takes place before the activation of mediation, and why not every kind of external conversation becomes internalised.



### 5.3.1: External Conversation and Internalisation.

As previously explained, external conversation is defined as that part of internal conversation that will be externalised, and is related to the external world and the social environment with which each individual interacts. Thus, each person interacts with others in various ways in the social world of her everyday life. In fact, every individual is in constant interaction with the external world; this can be seen by the level of interpersonal relations, socio-cultural settings and interaction with social institutions and structures, and so on. However, as I mentioned when defining mediation at the beginning of this chapter, the individual knowingly interacts with only part of the external world and not with external world as a whole. Within what is known to her, each person chooses which part of the external world she will internalise and which part she will not, so only a part of the external world features in her epistemologically limited subjectivity. This can be illustrated by a brief example: some drivers do not follow the speed limit regulations because they are not aware of them (i.e., they failed to see the speed limit sign), or because they choose not to follow them (i.e., they know what the speed limit is and consciously choose to disobey it); others opt to obey speed limit regulations. Thus not all individuals are aware of the same external stimulus, not all persons who are aware respond to it in the same way, and they thus produce different kinds of actions, and external reactions.

Aspects of this external world (e.g., conversations with other people, news on TV/radio, the electricity bill, the explanation of school regulations) are internalised (as Vygotsky suggested); some of them are further processed and filtered; and some may become matters of internal conversation and then externalised (in Vocate's

terms). For example, a student might hear something new that she wishes to internalise because she finds it interesting, as the following example shows:

**Teacher (external conversation):** In social sciences there is no single universal and ultimate truth.

The student considers this piece of information interesting and so she internalises it. She may memorise it for a day and then forget it, or she may reflect upon it. She may produce an internal conversation about it:

**Student (internal conversation):** This approach is very confusing and unstable. If there is no universal truth, then what is science? What are the principles of social sciences? Which social scientist should I believe? Who is right and who is wrong?

After this inner process or reflection, the student may reproduce her thoughts and externalise them to her parents; she may feel that she can share them with her teacher and classmates. In this example, a specific aspect of the external world, (of ideas) which also forms a specific external conversation, is internalised, processed and then externalised.

However, in a different case, aspects of the external environment with which an individual interacts may not be internalised. This might happen because the individual is not interested in a specific external conversation, as in the following example of an individual (A) and her friend (B):

**B (external conversation):** Tall blond women are usually stupid.

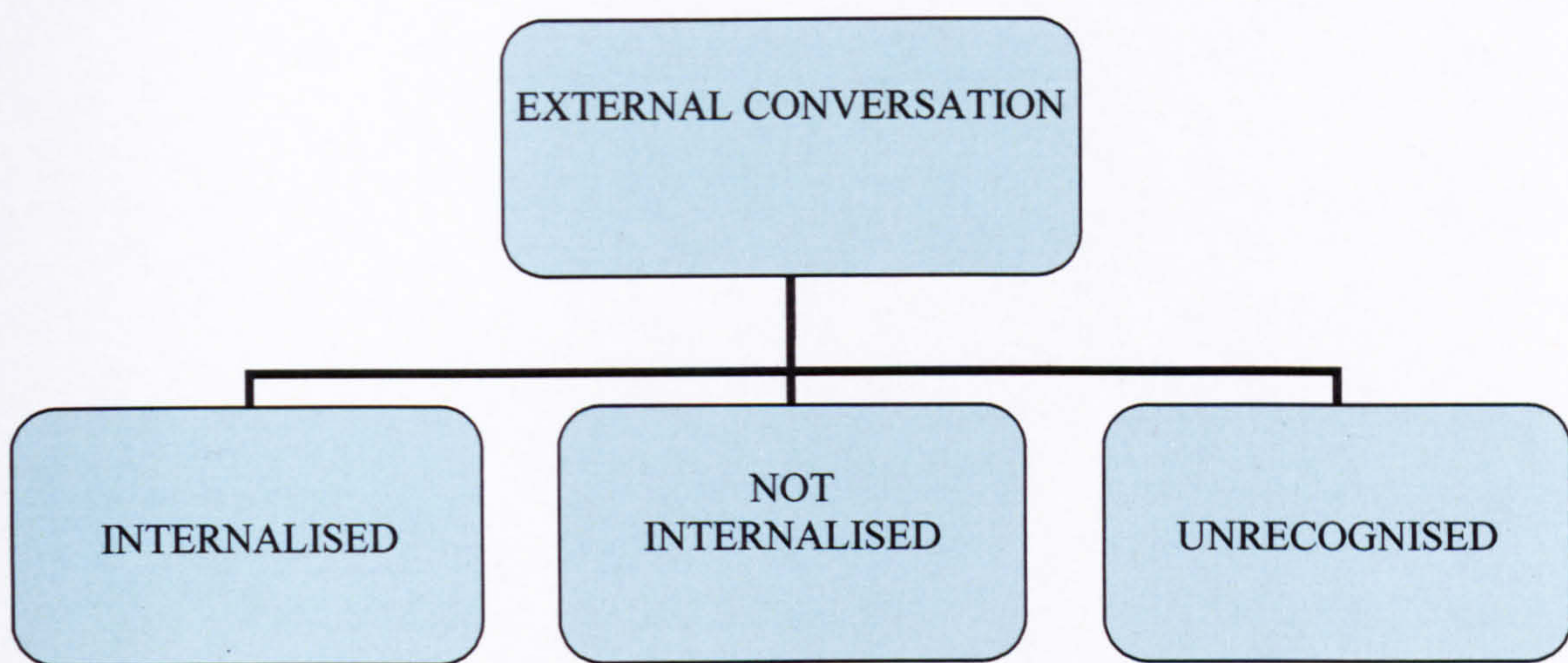


**A (internal conversation): Yeah, right!**

Here, having internally thought ‘Yeah, right!’, A may subsequently forget about it. This means that this specific external conversation will not be internalised because the individual chooses not to do so. On another occasion, an external conversation might not be internalised because it is unrecognised: for example, an individual will not internalise an external conversation that she did not pay attention to because she was thinking or doing something else, or because she could not hear it because the TV was on and she did not realise her friend was speaking.

The conversational interaction created between the individual and the social environment may thus be a) internalised, or b) not internalised, or c) unrecognised. This can be maintained for two reasons: because individuals choose what to internalise and when; and because, in many instances, they do not register dialogical aspects of the social environment and consequently do not internalise them. The basic relationship between external conversation and internalisation may therefore be represented as follows:





5.4: Mediation Mechanism.

It should be restated that individuals’ interaction with the social world is an area of sociology which has been extensively studied (e.g., in ethnography, sociolinguistics and communication studies). However, what Wiley and Archer suggest is that the individual also interacts with herself and this is a type of interaction that has not so far been systematically investigated within sociology. My work focuses on the way the individual recognises, records and internalises the social world (whether or not consisting of intrapersonal relations, or social expectations). My interest is in the way the individual interacts with herself and the dialogical social environment and I propose that such interactions are processed through a specific inner mechanism which is called mediation mechanism.

I will now examine how external conversation is internalised and propose the process of internalisation as one part of the mediation mechanism. Mediation will be seen to



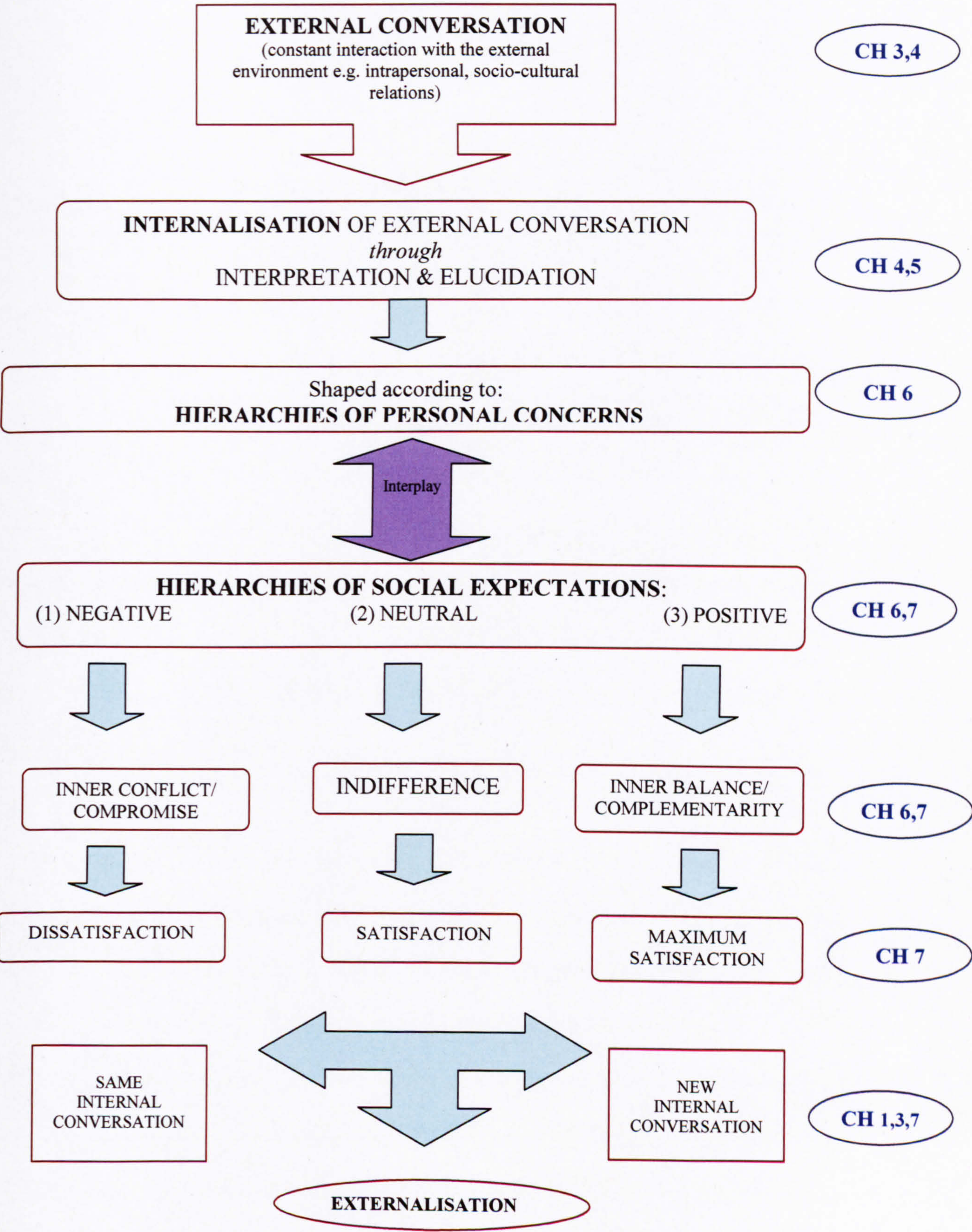
consist of specific levels or separate processes which can be understood as separate ‘stages’.

In this section, I will use a diagram to introduce the main features of the mediation mechanism; in the following chapters, I will discuss each phase represented in this diagram. It must be stressed that the diagram I propose is the central representation of mediation as I introduce it in this work. This diagram represents the stages/phases or filters which constitute the process of mediation. Each phase is discussed separately in the present work, and each process is thus marked with the corresponding chapter number. Some of these processes have not yet been discussed and will be presented in later sections.

The main function of this diagram is an attempt to represent schematically the central issue of this thesis: What is the mediation mechanism? The analytical description of each stage will clarify how this process operates, what its importance is and why it consists of these specific elements.



MEDIATION MECHANISM





#### 5.4.1: First stage: Internalisation of External Conversation.

The first and most important process of mediation is what I have repeatedly referred to in this work as ‘internalisation’. Internalisation is the ability possessed by every normal individual to receive, process and, in some cases, transform external conversation into internal conversation. Internalisation is a term initially introduced by Vygotsky ([1934]1962)<sup>5</sup> to explain how ‘egocentric speech’ (i.e., when a child talks aloud to herself) becomes inner speech at some point during childhood. Somewhat similarly, Vocate (1994) stresses the importance of the process of encoding thought into language and of decoding heard speech into meaning; in other words, she suggests that language (external conversation) is decoded (internalised) into meaning (internal conversation). Although Vocate employs different terms from those I use, she is describing what I understand to be ‘internalisation’. Finally, internalisation is a process that has been addressed using CA: in Chapter 4, I attempted an explanation using the methodology specific to CA of how external conversation is internalised.

My main suggestion at this stage is that mediation is the elucidation of external conversation and the interpretation of internal conversation. In fact, when an individual receives external conversation which she will internalise, she firstly interprets or elucidates it. As previously explained (in Chapter 4), each utterance that an individual produces constitutes a speech act. This means that, in conversation, individuals are not simply exchanging information: a specific kind of action is involved. According to Nofsinger (1991), such actions are also known as constitutive

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<sup>5</sup> For further discussion see 3.1.1 and 4.1.

rules (specifically, promise, request, threat, offer, etc). These rules can also be processed internally. Let us consider the following hypothetical example of an external conversation between two individuals, A and B:

A: Please, please marry me! I will always love you. You are my everything!

B: Stop asking me! You know I don't like commitment.

A: Let me change your mind. I will make you happy, I will buy you a house,  
I will do anything you want.

B: If you don't stop talking about marriage, I will leave right now!

This example presents a hypothetical conversation between two lovers talking about marriage. Each individual produces an external conversation which is internalised by the recipient (this can be assumed, since they both participate in this conversation and they need to process what they hear in order to reply). Using CA methodology, we can evaluate the example above to offer support for the proposition that external conversation is internalised through interpretation and elucidation of external conversation, which takes place according to certain constitutive rules. In this example, such rules can be seen to apply. When A begs his partner to marry him, he is actually producing a request. Thus the external conversation 'Please, please marry me!' is an utterance/speech act that A produces and B perceives or elucidates as a request. In order for B to do this, she needs to internalise and interpret it. This specific interpretation (i.e., request) is accurate within the specific context of this situation<sup>6</sup>. When A says 'I will always love you', B interprets this speech act as a promise. Like a request, a promise forms a constitutive rule of the speech act<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, as B internalises the phrase 'I will always love you', she elucidates it and recognises it as a

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<sup>6</sup> A fifteen year old girl might produce the same utterance in an exchange with her five year old cousin as they play; this would not be interpreted as request but as a joke, or game.

<sup>7</sup> See also 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.



promise. Similarly, when A says ‘I will make you happy, I will buy you a house, I will do anything you want’, B understands that he is making her an offer (to make her happy, to buy her a house, to do anything she wants). Finally, when B says ‘If you don’t stop talking about marriage, I will leave right now!’, A realises that she has been threatening him.

Thus it can be understood that external conversation is internalised by the individual and, in fact, that the individual interprets what she receives. In a different instance, an individual who hears someone shouting at her might internalise this external conversation with fear, or wonder ‘Why he is speaking to me in that way?’; she may interpret his aggressive attitude negatively and leave. Each external conversation must thus be internalised in order to be further processed.

Thus, I propose that internalisation is the first stage of mediation mechanism and that it operates through the elucidation and interpretation of external conversation. In this way, the individual makes sense of external conversation<sup>8</sup> and decides if and how to respond. As previously explained, not all external conversations are internalised and, even when internalisation occurs, the ways that the process takes place may vary. The significant aspect is that, using CA methodology, it has become apparent that individuals internalise external conversation and interpret it before they produce a response or before they further reflect upon it.

To summarise, mediation consists of certain stages of which the first is internalisation of the external conversation. This internalisation takes place through the interpretation

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<sup>8</sup> Although at times this may not be easy, for example, because people might be speaking different languages or dialects, or different versions of slang.

and elucidation of external conversation and is shaped according to the personal and social hierarchies of each individual. Subsequent chapters will introduce the next stages of mediation.

### 5.5: Discussion.

In this chapter, I have introduced the notion of mediation and made an attempt to collate all the elements relevant to mediation that were discussed earlier and to present them in a systematic way. Having explained the main aspects of social theory, psychology and CA to be used in the analysis, I explored the connection between external conversation and internalisation. I proposed both that external conversation could be a) internalised, or b) not internalised or c) unrecognised, and that, where external conversation is internalised, the process of mediation is involved. I then presented the mediation mechanism in a form of a diagram and examined the first phase/stage that comprises it (i.e., internalisation).

The following chapters will address the subsequent phases or stages of the mediation process. Some have been already presented; others will now be introduced for the first time. The final section of this work will complete the description of the diagram and present a synthesised analysis.



## CHAPTER 6

### Mediation Dichotomy.

#### 6: Prolegomena.

Having introduced a central diagram of mediation in the last chapter, I shall now examine the second and third stages of mediation, namely, the interplay between personal hierarchies of concerns, and social hierarchies of expectations. What has become apparent through the previous discussion is that the mediation process is nothing more than a constant debate, and exchange of arguments, thoughts, ideas, feelings and conversations between the social and the private spheres of people's lives.

#### 6.1: The Interplay between the Personal and Social Hierarchies.

In much of social theory the individual is conceptualised as a social construct. Yet where the mediation mechanism viewed from this perspective, it would represent a social filter which basically was suppressive of everything. However, recent social theory (through Archer's and Wiley's work) argues that the individual is not just a part of society: she also has relatively autonomous properties and powers, one of which is constantly to be in debate with the social environment. Mediation constitutes the point at which internal and external conversation meet or separate. I shall now examine what mediation consists of and attempt to demonstrate how it operates.

So far, this study presented mediation as an endless interplay between the internal and external environment of the individual. It is also necessary, however, to explain exactly how this endless interplay operates. In the previous chapter, I explained the operation of what I have termed the first ‘stage’ of mediation (internalisation). More exactly, what I propose is that mediation firstly internalises external conversation and that more complex stages or steps are subsequently involved. These involve the interplay between personal hierarchies/priorities and concerns and social hierarchies/priorities; social expectations and outcomes depend upon how the two combine with one another.

### 6.2: Second stage: Personal Hierarchies.

Personal hierarchies are the priorities each person has and according to which her life is organized. Such priorities should be understood as the main concerns of the individual, which can sometimes be experienced as needs, or as the values endorsed by each person<sup>1</sup>. Examples might include an individual’s concern to become a virtuoso musician or football player; or someone’s concern to be fair, a just person, perhaps a champion of equality, or the concern (which might also be interpreted as a need) a father may have to connect everything he does with his children.

Let us first examine in more detail the importance of such concerns for the individual. For instance, some people on becoming parents, organise their lives around their children who are now their first priority. Such parents curtail the hours they spend away from their children and spend their whole weekend with them; they spend money on their

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<sup>1</sup> Further discussion on the importance of what we care appears below.



children's needs before attending to their own; they live in a house designed around children and so on. These people have concerns other than their children, but they choose to prioritise their children. By contrast, another person's main concern might be to be rich or famous. Over a lifetime, an individual's priorities may change (e.g., one becomes a parent when one has children), but others may remain constant (e.g., a person's need to become and remain rich, or famous).

An individual's personality characteristic (as opposed to concerns) also needs to be taken into account. If, for example, a person is shy and insecure, much of her life may be shaped by these characteristics, e.g. her attempting to avoid meeting new people or talking in public; perhaps finding it hard to form relationships, never giving an interview, avoiding eye contact, not frequently going to unfamiliar places, and so on. The opposite would be a person who likes to attract attention, by for example changing her clothes often, talking about herself constantly, making sure that her new watch could be seen by others, etc. Personality characteristics, such these and the dispositions to which they give rise, are not the same as what I describe as 'concerns'; however, they can be compatible or interrelated.

As Frankfurt suggests, 'it may sometimes be possible for a person, by making a certain choice or decision, effectively to bring it about that he cares about a certain thing or that he cares about one thing more than about another' (1988: 85). People do have one single concern; rather, they live their lives according to a combination of values, principles and characteristics.

As defined earlier, mediation is the relationship between internal and external conversation. I shall demonstrate how this relationship is connected with personal hierarchies of concerns by returning to the example of someone who prioritises his desire to be a good father. The following represents the internal conversation of a man when he receives an invitation from his co-workers to go out for a drink:

A1: Oh, that's great!

A2: It was about time for me to get to know these people better.

A3: It took them quite some time to do it.

A4: They did not know me well, but now we are going to be close friends!

A5: I am so bored staying in with my wife and kids every night!

A6: Finally! I will have some fun again!

A7: I will e-mail them straight away to thank them for the invitation.

This man clearly does not have his family as his first priority. A man who does might have a different internal conversation:

A1: Oh, that's great!

A2: Why do they want me to go out with them? I see them every day at work!

A3: They know I have a family; that's why they didn't invite me before.

A4: Now they have changed their minds and they want me to go out with them?

A5: Maybe it would be nice to have a couple of drinks with some friends for a change.

A6: What am I saying? I haven't seen my kids all week and now all I want to do is go for a drink?

A7: What if my wife starts thinking like that?

A8: Besides it's better to spend the money taking the kids out.



A9: I will tell those guys that I can't make it this time.

What I am suggesting here is that every individual's personal hierarchy of concerns is important to the nature of her internal conversations and also the way the mediation mechanism works. One of the main elements that mediation consists of is what people care about. Although other elements are also involved, at this point in the analysis I shall focus on each individual's priorities and the way the mediation mechanism reflects them. In the second aforementioned example presented, the parent who is invited out for a drink produces an internal conversation about this invitation. Although he would like to go out for a change, his ultimate concern to be a good parent does not allow him to do so. The mediation process filters his will and he convinces himself that it is better to spend his time and money on his family rather than on drinks. Thus his internal conversation is about the invitation and, through mediation, he chooses to externalise part of this internal conversation, telling his colleagues, 'I can't make it this time'. The rest of his internal conversation remains unspoken.

When a hierarchy of concerns becomes the prism through which an individual interprets life and evaluates reality, then this prism represents the personal character or aspect of the mediation process (e.g., the concern of a parent to be a good father could be so strong that all his actions and decisions have to be filtered through the parental role: whether or not he will go to the cinema, or smoke inside the house, or work at the weekend, or buy a new suit, and so on). Some such priorities have been selectively internalised from society

and reflect normative restraints or inducements<sup>2</sup>. For example, a restraint that some parents regard as important is the norm of not spending money on themselves, but of providing all the money they can for their children; similarly, an normative inducement to which some parents respond is the expectation of achieving personal fulfilment through parenthood.

If we think back to the first stage of mediation, we recall that the individual internalises external conversation through interpreting and elucidating it<sup>3</sup>. If we focus on the personal aspect of the mediation process (in the second example above), we can see how this operates in relation to internalisation: the internal conversation the father has after receiving his invitation can be seen as his elucidation of it. In other words, the reason that the specific internal conversation involved its specific content is because of the personal concern of this particular parent. This man's internal conversation is refracted through his commitment to being a good parent. His external conversation, 'I can't make it this time', can be understood in exactly the same terms. Although they have different contents, his internal and external conversation are based on the same personal concern.

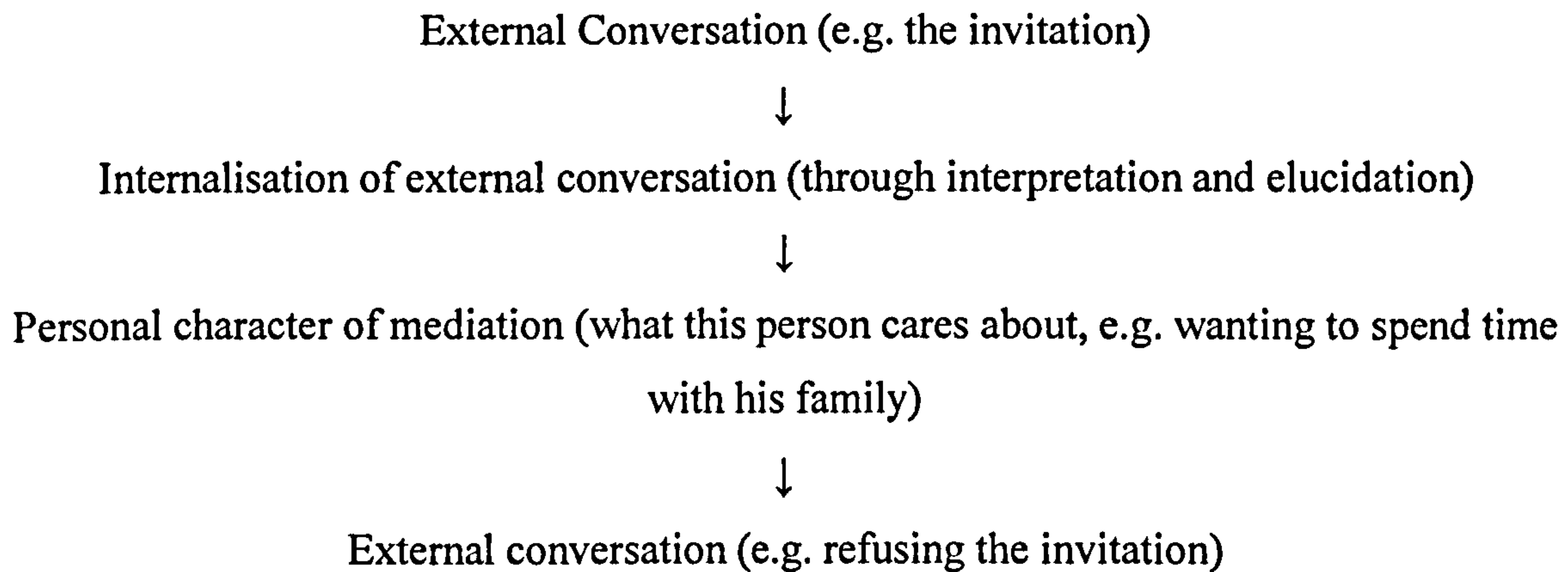
Using the same diagram accompanying the initial description of mediation presented in the previous chapter, we might represent this situation schematically as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> Further discussion of restraints and inducements appears later in this chapter.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapters 4 and 5.



Mediation:

It is important to realise that, as a process, mediation operates according to how a person evaluates different elements of reality and there are many ways in which she can do so. This is what ultimately demonstrates each person's uniqueness: this personal way of evaluating reality and interpreting life. This 'way' does not consist of one concern alone; indeed, as I will explain later, many aspects may be involved. It is important to note, however, that the mediation process is responsible for the 'way' each person follows. The next section expands upon the same argument.

6.2.1: Personal Concerns.

Our personal hierarchies of concerns reflect the importance of what we care about. Whatever we see, hear, feel and in general terms whatever we receive from our social environment, is 'filtered' according to what is important to us. According to Frankfurt (1988), there is a connection between what a person cares about and what she will think it

is best for herself to do. Thus, what is important to someone can often be understood through her actions. For example, safe-guarding and always wearing a wedding ring may be very important to some people, even if the ring itself is not expensive. Someone who works more than she has to, is probably doing it because her job is important to her. Frankfurt explains that 'a person who cares about something is, as it were, invested in it. He identifies himself with what he cares about in the sense that he makes himself vulnerable to losses and susceptible to benefits depending upon whatever he cares about is diminished or enhanced' (1988: 83). It can thus be understood that individuals care more about some things than about others. The more important something is for an individual, the more central a role it has in her life.

The example used in the previous section concerns parents and their children. For some parents, their children are the most important thing in their lives and the parents' happiness and fulfilment depends on their children. For others, money may be more important, for others recognition, and so on. As stated earlier, Frankfurt suggests that 'it may sometimes be possible for a person, by making a certain choice or decision, effectively to bring it about that he cares about a certain thing or that he cares about one thing more than about another', but he qualifies this proposition by continuing: 'but that depends upon conditions which do not always prevail. It certainly cannot be assumed that what a person cares about is generally under his immediate voluntary control' (1988: 85). Someone may care greatly about parenthood, but be unable to have or adopt a child. Personal hierarchies and concerns are formed according to what individuals care about



most and, consequently, their respective internal and external conversations are inflected by their concerns.

At this point, it is important to understand that what we care about is the sphere of life pertinent to our concerns. This can be illustrated by an example. Let us consider a minister in the government of the United Kingdom. He has been in the same post for some years. He is a public person and others are interested in and depend on his progress and in the efficiency of his methods. This man tried hard to get this position and he waited for a long time to become a minister. He knows that this position is the highest possible for him, and for that reason he wants others to remember him as a 'good minister'. Clearly, for this person, his job is very important to him (and to others). For this reason, he spends the majority of his days in his office, or travelling and attending meetings related to his duties; he watches the news every day to ensure that his image is appropriate; he pays a group of people to read the newspapers and report what might be interesting to him; and he socialises only with people of high social status. This is typical of someone who cares greatly about something: he shapes his life according to what he cares about. As Frankfurt states: 'not only does [this person] care about following a particular course of action which he is constrained to follow. He also cares about caring about it. Therefore he guides himself away from being critically affected by anything – in the outside world or within himself – which might divert him or dissuade him either from following that course or from caring as much as he does about following it' (1988: 87).

We deliberate upon our concerns according to what is important to us but also according to social expectations associated with the roles we care about occupying. Thus mediation is the process that attempts to connect the external/social environment with our inner life, and consists of specific stages, or certain filters. The first three stages of mediation are the process of internalisation, personal hierarchies of concerns, and social hierarchies of expectations. Consequently, when we receive a stimulus from our social environment (e.g., external conversation), we internalise it, interpret it according to what we care about, deliberate upon it in relation to certain social expectations and, in some cases, we externalise it. In other words, we let in external conversations according to our principles, priorities and specific social expectations that we endorse or that impinge upon our concerns, and through this process we decide what to let out.

### 6.3: Third stage: Social Hierarchies.

In addition to the personal hierarchies of priorities of particular persons, there are also social hierarchies of expectations to be considered. Of course, social and private hierarchies of concerns are usually interrelated and do not often operate independently. Here, I am looking separately at 'social hierarchies' in order to define the term before proceeding to further analysis.

It should be noted that the term 'social hierarchy of expectations' refers those groups of people, organisations, institutions, hold as important. Many people organise their lives according to one of these, which they endorse as being supremely important to them.



Examples include religion, the army, the family or one's peer group. Some people choose to be 'true Christians' or 'true Muslims', and thus try to follow and maintain the way of life advocated by their religion. This may include specific normative restraints, e.g., dietary stipulations, and inducements, e.g. the opportunity to enter Paradise. Thus, a committed Muslim would not eat pork because keeping to the dietary regulations of her faith is an important part of considering herself to be a 'true Muslim'.

For some people, it might seem that social expectations are much more important than personal concerns; such people will blindly follow the rules each institution defines as important. A soldier, for example, might perceive his role of 'soldier' as the most important factor directing his actions. A 'good soldier' always respects his superiors and obeys their commands. His life is well organised, he must exercise as regulations dictate, and be comfortable with and proficient in the use of weapons. A person who perceives life through the eyes of a soldier has a very specific view of what is important and what has to be done. Let us imagine two scenarios to demonstrate this. In the first, a man enters a hair salon and asks for a haircut. The hairdresser tells him that the haircut he is requesting is old-fashioned and not very popular with women. Perhaps he should try something new. The man (A) may have this internal conversation:

A1: A new hair cut? Why? What is wrong with the one I want?

A2: Well, she is a professional and she knows what suits me better.

A3: But I have had this haircut since I was young and I haven't had any problem finding girlfriends.

A4: Maybe things have changed now and young women want different styles.

A5: Or maybe this hairdresser is too interested in my haircut.

A6: What if she wants to tell me something indirectly?

A7: Oh! I am definitely going to have this new haircut and then I will ask for her phone number!!

However, if the man wanting the haircut is soldier (B), the internal conversation might progress like this:

B1: A new haircut? Why? What is wrong with the one I want?

B2: Even if she is a professional, she should know that my haircut is the most masculine haircut.

B3: I have had the same haircut since I joined the army and it would be nice to have a change. Many soldiers do.

B4: Oh! What am I thinking? Those soldiers are excuses for soldiers!

B5: Why do I listen to this girl who is trying to find ways to take my money?

B6: Men who take their life seriously know what they want and I know what haircut I want!

B7: I know better! I will tell her that I prefer to keep the same style.

B's internal conversation is influenced by the social expectations of the army, reinforced by its sanctions which he presumably endorsed. For B, a proper soldier should have an appearance that fellow members of the military would approve and respect. On the other hand, a teenager might not have a problem with changing his appearance every day; and, of course, there are many ways someone could interpret a hairdresser's suggestion to change style. What I am suggesting is that social hierarchies of expectations may be very important for some people and the internal conversation that these people have may be structured according to them. In the second example, although B might indeed look better with a different haircut, it is more important to him to be recognised as having the



appearance appropriate to his profession than to look good. Parallel influences may operate on someone who strongly believes that he has to be a 'true' Christian, or communist, or patriot, activist or homosexual. If people have strong feelings about these aspects of their identity, they usually perceive their lives and understand reality through such social characteristics and hierarchies. In such cases, the mediation process filters internal or external conversation through the social priorities and hierarchies, rejecting and editing out personal impulses that fail to fit into the expectations of the role.

The social character of mediation is formed by the social environment, the influence it has on the individual and the way the individual perceives it. This function of mediation is constituted by means of the individual's socialisation (to use Simmel's term) and all the elements that are related to this, i.e., family, peers, education, religion, law, etc. Individuals may choose to consider some of the above elements as priorities through which they perceive their lives (e.g., they may decide to live their lives as 'authentic'/'proper' communists or liberals, or they might consider it a priority to do whatever they can to protect the Earth, the environment or nature, or the social ideal of justice)<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore as an individual grows up, he becomes part of various groups and institutions; as he develops, he may create something (e.g., a company, a family) and thus the nature of his 'attachment' (in Goffman's terms) to the existing social order may vary. There might be endless reasons for each person to adopt a particular set of social expectations,

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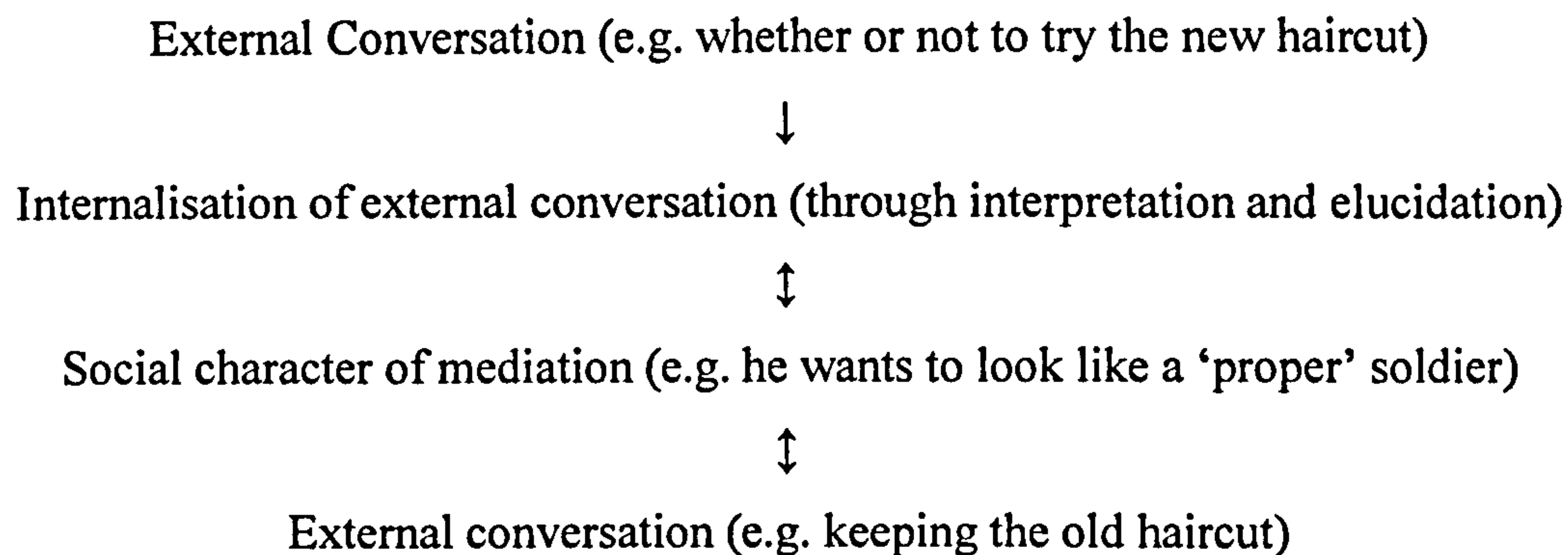
<sup>4</sup> Extreme cases may occur, such as suicide bombers or fanatics who have dedicated their lives in persuading others to follow their religion, ideas, etc., but these are rarities.

but an obvious one would be other people's acceptance and appreciation, for example, by earning a decent living. Thus if a housewife wishes to be perceived by others as a good or 'proper' mother, wife and home-maker, she makes decisions, spends her money, dresses, and visits places that match the representation of 'a good housewife'. She may produce internal conversations accordingly, for example: 'I will make apple pie today and I will leave the window open, so the whole neighbourhood will smell it!' There are also some social expectations that people follow because they are obliged to by the law, for example contributing to their country's tax system.

As described in the previous chapter, the first stage of mediation is the internalisation of external conversation through the interpretation and elucidation of external conversation. To illustrate how mediation can be perceived in its social aspect, we can return to the example of the soldier's haircut in which mediation can be seen in three different ways: 1) as the interpretation of internal conversation: although the soldier would like to try something new, it is more important for him to look like a 'proper' soldier; 2) as the elucidation of external conversation, since the soldier decides to retain the same haircut; and 3) as the process of combining what is proper with what the individual wants, which in this example comes to the same thing. The soldier's internal and external conversation thus derive from the same set of social expectations. It can be clearly seen that his decision was taken in order to conform to a specific social hierarchy, the military. This can be represented schematically as follows:

Mediation:





The social character of mediation can be obvious in some cases. For example, during the Cold War, and indeed afterwards, many communists lived their whole lives according to their political convictions and sacrificed many things because they believed so strongly in the party. Of course, when a regime is authoritarian (e.g., the U.S.S.R. under the leadership of Stalin; or Germany under Hitler<sup>5</sup>), people may easily be ‘mystified’ about social priorities, since such expectations are usually imposed and the subject of ideological manipulation. In such cases, it is hard to determine whether individuals’ concerns derive from an inner free conversation or if their social priorities are externally imposed.

### 6.3.1: Social Expectations: Negative and Positive.

In this work, I understand social expectations to be the negative, positive or neutral ones which individuals experience in their everyday lives. I shall firstly analyse certain kinds of social expectations in terms of how many people they affect, rather than in terms of their relative importance. The most general social expectation may be seen as the law of a

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<sup>5</sup> No analogy is implied.

land. Laws, regulations, legal restrictions or rights affect every member of a society. They can be viewed as enforceable or constitutional social expectations, in that individuals do not have the choice whether to follow them or not: all individuals must follow the rules laid down by law or face the consequences. Obviously, some people choose not to follow the normative/legal expectations and thus become marginal or unwanted and sometimes criminals.

Second, social expectations can derive from institutions such as religious, military or educational systems, etc. Institutional social expectations affect specific groups of people (e.g., school regulations affect students, army regulations affect enlisted and auxiliary personnel). Meeting many institutional expectations is a voluntary matter (e.g., determining to be a good student, or a good Buddhist) rather than compulsory. However, as soon as a person decides to become a committed member of an institution (e.g., be enlisting in the army), that individual must adhere to all the relevant rules of the institution. In the U.K., the educational system is compulsory for all children over the age of five until sixteen; but the school's expectation that a child be a good and quiet student is not enforceable, only the student's commitment can produce that.

Another kind of social expectation according to the number of people that can be affected is the expectations of informal groups. Such groups might include a football club, or the fan club of a singer, or a university's basketball or chess team. The social expectations of an informal group usually involve collective activities relevant to the group's interests; they are completely voluntaristic in nature. For example, ecological organisations



organise activities relevant to nature and animals, while other humanistic organisations might try to raise money to help children in need. Individuals' level of involvement clearly varies; for various people, such forms of social expectations may be greatly more important to them than others, whilst yet other people remain unmoved by them.

Finally, social expectations can be interpersonal in nature. Interpersonal expectations involve individuals who participate in a specific kind of continuous interaction or socialisation, such as family (family expectations concern the members of a specific family), friends, colleagues, peer groups, research teams etc. The smallest interpersonal relation is that of two individuals (e.g., a couple, or friends); even between only two people, interpersonal expectations are observed, for example, the expectation each spouse has that the other will remain faithful, or the expectation that two friends can each depend on the other. Interpersonal expectations may become extremely binding, as in the case of family expectations. Parents expect their children to respect and listen to them. Sometimes, however, such expectations might become restrictive for some members of the family (e.g., children/teenagers having to follow their parents' religious beliefs, or dress according to their parents' taste, or be good students, learn French and how to play the piano, etc.).

In general terms, these represent only some kinds of social expectations. The main aim of the categories offered here is to illustrate the fact that social expectations can derive from large, powerful institutions (e.g., the state), and small, but important, groups (e.g., family, friends), organisations with voluntary membership (e.g., the church, the university) or

informal organisations (tennis club, feminist group). Social expectations may derive from a single social group such as the priesthood (e.g., members of the Greek Orthodox Church should not eat meat during Holy Week) or from a combination of social groups (e.g., the parents' expectation that their children be good and obedient students is also the school's expectation and, in some cases, the church's expectation). However, in some cases, the social expectations of different social groups can be in conflict (e.g., young boys who let someone become a member of their group if he is not afraid to smoke and drink, which conflicts with the law that states it is illegal to smoke and drink under age).

I divide social expectations into two main categories: negative and positive. Negative social expectations (or in some cases restraints) refer to those expectations with a negative effect on the individual; positive expectations (or in some cases sanctions) refer to expectations that have an encouraging effect on the individual. Negative social expectations can also be understood as restrictions that society sets upon the individual. Examples might include the level of tolerance a society has for homosexuals, racial minorities or religious expression; the specific responses a society may display in relation to any kind of social exclusion, such as people with mental or physical disabilities, single parents, or the poor and homeless. Negative social expectations can also be observed in criminal subcultures like the Mafia or analogous groups which expect their members to act illicitly in order to be accepted and respected.

Positive social expectations refer to those that facilitate individuals. These might include scholarships available from the state that help students to continue their education,



specific laws that help excluded people to become active members of society (such as an equal opportunities policy), and social recognition for hard work, for voluntary action or participation in community activities. Neutral social expectations have no effect on the individual: if an individual wants to become an athlete or an artist or to collect rare books, this is not influenced by any social expectations. Society is neutral to such activities and concerns.

Negative and positive social expectations must be distinguished from constraints and enablements, since the latter derive from a specific discussion in the literature concerning how structures and cultures impact upon people. In the present work, I use the term ‘social expectations’ in a less restricted sense. Constraints and enablements are also known in the literature as structural conditioning. Although I defend the individual’s inner freedom and capacity for personal autonomy, it is undeniable that certain restraints are involved in an individual’s everyday internal and external conversations. If we return once more to the example of the soldier and his haircut, it can be seen that this individual upholds a specific social hierarchy (namely, the army) and chooses to follow the expectations that this specific social institution represents. Thus, when I refer to social hierarchies, it must be understood that social expectations are also involved.

Conversely, as Archer (2003: 4-7) explains, constraints and enablements are transmitted to individuals by shaping the situations (structural or cultural) in which they find themselves, such that some courses of action would be impeded and others facilitated. Archer stresses that structural objectivity and agential subjectivity are both entailed by

the concepts of enablements and constraints, and she explains that these notions derive from structural and cultural emergent properties. Social expectations do not, however, derive from these notions. Archer states that 'it is essential to distinguish between the existence of structural properties and the exercise of their causal powers' (2003: 7) and she adds: 'the activation of causal powers associated with constraints and enablements depends upon the use made of personal emergent properties to formulate agential projects' (2003: 7). Specifically, Archer underlines the fact that agential projects 'have to be of such a nature that they activate particular causal powers' and that 'to become constraints and enablements involves a relationship with the use made of personal emergent properties. Whether or not their causal power to constrain or to enable is realised, and for whom they constitute constraints and enablements, depends upon the nature of the relationship between them and the agential powers' (2003: 8).

Thus, Archer emphasises the fact that constraints and enablements must be related to a specific project. Besides, as she states, 'constraints and enablements only indicate the difficulty or ease with which certain projects could be accomplished, *ceteris paribus*, by groups of people standing in given relations to (part of) society' (2003: 9). According to Archer's argument, the difference between negative and positive social expectations and constraints and enablements might be illustrated as follows: it may be difficult/impossible to solve a scientific problem because of specific cultural constraints (e.g. unavailability of necessary equipment). However, a researcher who tries to solve the problem expects the members of his team to work according to specific standards. No matter how hard the team works and how high the expected standards remain, the scientific problem continues



to be unsolved because of specific cultural constraints irrelevant to the scientist's expectations. Thus, the concept of constraints and enablements, as used in the literature, has a much more specified sense than that of social expectations.

It is necessary to understand how social expectations can be related to the individual's personal hierarchy of concerns. When a person produces internal conversations concerning a specific project, the relevant negative and positive social expectations will be processed as well. Let us consider the example of a poor girl (A) who is a gipsy and lives on a small camp outside a Greek village. She is thinking of continuing her studies after she finishes high school. Because she has been a good student, she has received positive offers from several universities. However, she has a daughter: A became pregnant at the age of fifteen, the father of the child left as soon as he found out, and A's parents decided that she should keep the baby, not least because they could not afford an abortion. Although A graduated a year later than the rest of the students in her class, her performance was commendable. Let us consider how she might deliberate upon the positive and negative social expectations that her decision involves:

A1: I want so much to go to university and get a degree.

A2: Nobody can blame me for wanting that. Not all students got the offers that I did!

A3: But my parents, instead of encouraging me to study and be able to provide a better future for my daughter, pray silently for me to decide to help them sell their harvest.

A4: They can't see that it might be difficult at the beginning, but it is going to make a great difference to me in the future.

A5: I would go to the closest university and apply for a scholarship. I know I will get it! I can get it! I will even work part-time if I have to.

A6: If I could only convince my parents that just because I am a young, poor, gipsy mother, it doesn't mean that I should not study and become better than I am right now.

In this example, A produces an internal conversation as she assesses the positive and negative social expectations which are related to her ambition to go to university. At the beginning of her internal conversation, she considers the positive social expectations of her 'project': she wants to become educated; everyone would agree that this is a good thing for her and she deserves it, since she has received positive offers. She considers that if she can get her degree she can provide a better future for her child (because she will get a better job, make more money and be respected). She also believes that she will get a scholarship (positive social expectation) and states that she is willing to get a job. At the same time, she considers the negative social expectations that derive from her family and her wider social circle, namely, that she should get a job immediately and support her child instead of studying. She is a very young mother with many responsibilities; she does not have the means to support her child and she is a gipsy girl in a Greek encampment. All these negative social expectations should discourage her from wanting to study.

Each person seeks to live her life according to certain priorities. Social expectations are factors (or filters) used by the individual (and thus by the mediation mechanism) which an individual must take into account in both her inner and social worlds. Some social expectations derive from the social environment that everyone must adhere to (e.g., legal



system, taxation, or the highway code). At the same time, some of these social expectations may also constitute personal priorities or values. Thus, racism is a human behaviour which is socially unacceptable to many people, who consider themselves to have a personal commitment to fight racism actively and to defend human rights. In this case, non-racism (as a behaviour) is a social requirement (legally prescribing some forms of behaviour), but at the same time it constitutes a fundamental value for some people, equal in importance to the value (or agential inducement) of respecting individual difference, human rights, equal opportunities, etc. For other people, such values are not as important on a personal level, but these individuals still respect social and legal regulations and civil liberties. This does not mean, however, that they would actively fight for or against them. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind that certain social expectations constitute social rules that everybody is supposed to adhere to. At the same time, some of this normativity constitutes personal values and beliefs for certain people. The way individuals interpret social expectations, as well as accompanying restraints and inducements, is a purely personal process for each individual. As Archer explains, individuals deliberate on these factors in their own way, in relation to their personal concerns.

Social expectations are considered as part of the mediation process because they are factors that individuals include in their everyday deliberations, internal conversations and, therefore, external conversations. As has been seen in the diagram representing the mediation mechanism (in Chapter 5), social hierarchies of expectations constitute the stage following private hierarchies of concerns. The interplay between internal and

external conversation involves negative and positive social expectations as well as restraints and inducements. An example may help to clarify this: a student is trying to choose which universities she wants to apply to for her undergraduate degree. After producing the relevant internal conversation, she realises that she cannot apply to Oxford or Cambridge because the fees are higher than at other universities and her parents do not feel comfortable about these prestige institutions besides their high costs (negative social expectation). However, a teacher at her school has told her that she can apply for funding (positive social expectation) and has some chance of receiving it if she chooses a girls-only college (positive social expectation). The student convinces herself that she has the right (agential inducement) to apply to Oxbridge, but she soon reconsiders: even if she were accepted, there would be a good chance that she would not receive funding, and it would be very unpleasant of her to indirectly force her parents to support her, especially in a course of action that makes them uneasy. This is something that she will not let her parents feel (agential restraint). Here, the result of the student's deliberation is that her mediation process directs her to choose to apply to less expensive and lower status universities. This example combines the negative and positive social expectations and agential restraints and inducements that a student might take into account when deciding to which universities she will apply.

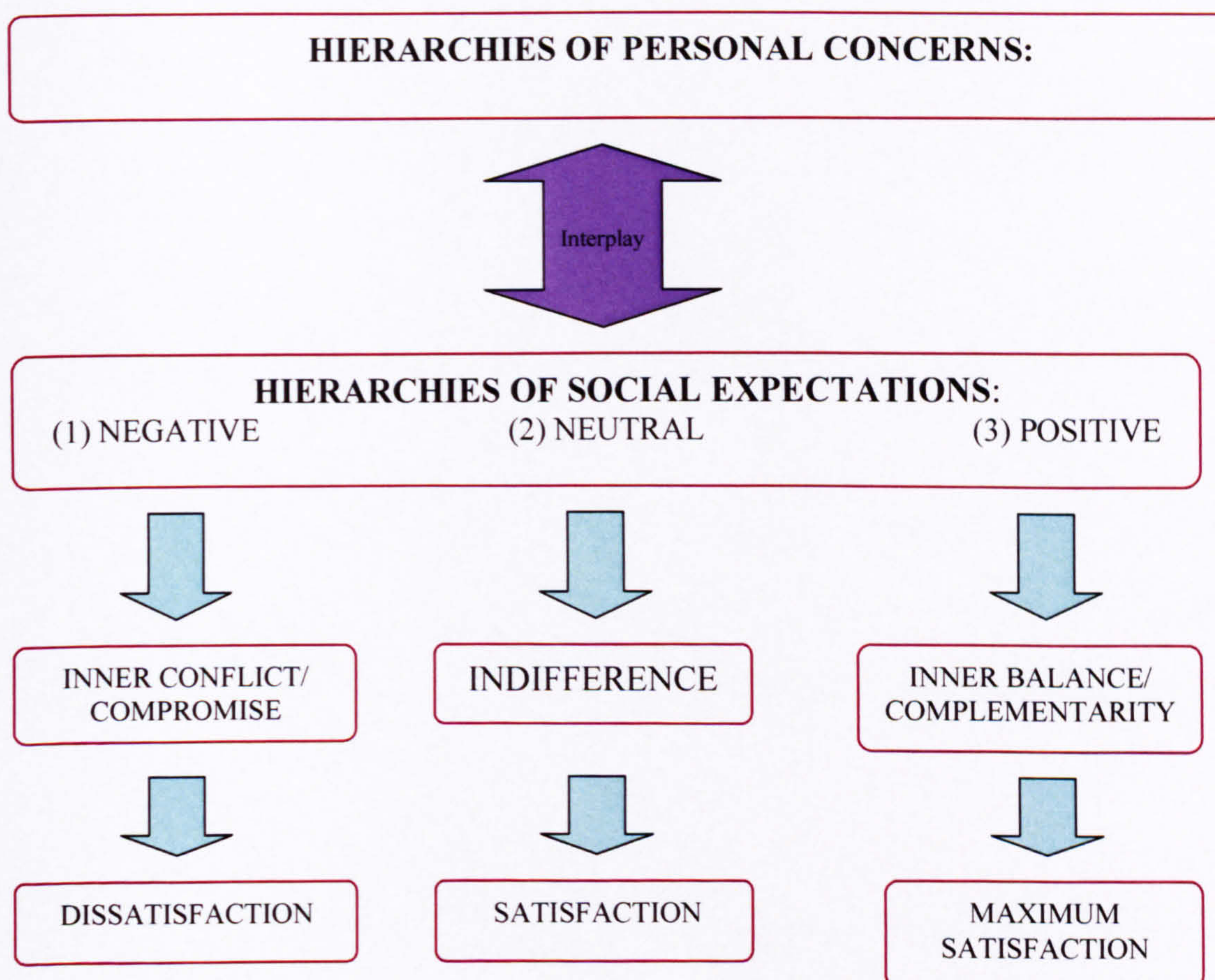
Social expectations may take many different forms and, as I shall discuss further, individuals consider such factors in various ways. Mediation, as the process that operates between internal and external conversation filters internal conversation before the



individual produces external conversation. Social expectations are one of the filters mediation uses; and this requires more detailed analysis.

#### 6.4: The Interplay between Personal Concerns and Social Expectations.

The diagram below describes in a more analytical way how the stages of social expectations and personal concerns operate:





This diagram, which is part of the more general mediation diagram presented in the previous chapter, shows an interplay taking place between social expectations and personal concerns. The next diagram describes how these two different stages of mediation can be related in different ways<sup>6</sup>:

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS (SE)			
PERSONAL CONCERNS (PC)	NEGATIVE (a)	NEUTRAL (b)	POSITIVE (c)
	CONTRADICTION BETWEEN SE & PC	INDIFFERENCE BETWEEN SE & PC	COMPLEMENTARITY BETWEEN SE & PC
	SE > PC ↑ Restraints/Conflict ↑ Dissatisfaction	SE < PC ↑ Responsibility ↑ Reflection	SE ↔ PC ↑ Balance ↑ Satisfaction

In the second diagram, I attempt to combine social expectations (top of the diagram) with personal concerns (left side of the diagram). As I shall discuss in later sections, personal and social hierarchies can be combined in two main ways: they can either be in conflict or in a state of complementarity.

As the diagram suggests, social expectations can take one of three main forms:

<sup>6</sup> In the diagram, the symbol ↑ represents an increasing tendency.



- (a) Negative social expectations: low levels of external/social freedom. An example might be conservative or traditional parents who do not allow their children to socialise with their peers, e.g., go for a walk, or have a date.
- (b) Neutral: indifference between social freedom and social constraints, for example, a child who is very interested in plants and whose family have no feelings either way about this: the parents do not really care about her interest in plants and so nothing is done either to promote it or to inhibit it.
- (c) Positive social expectations: high levels of external/social freedom, for instance, a liberal, progressive mother who encourages her son to go out with his friends and meet girls, who informs him about sexual precautions and invites his girlfriends to their home.

I will first describe the two poles of social expectations, negative and positive, and then address the neutral form.

#### 6.4.1: Personal Concerns and Negative Social Expectations.

Negative social expectations represent a situation in which personal concerns are in conflict with social expectations in a social environment that is controlled mainly through restraints. There is, therefore, a contradiction between social expectations and personal concerns. This can be demonstrated by some examples. The first describes extreme but

objective difficulties that an individual might face in the development of her internal conversation and thus her personal concerns. In a society controlled by an authoritarian regime, it may be very difficult for the individual to fulfil some of her personal concerns. For example, in Hitler's Germany, it would have been very difficult (if not impossible) for certain people to express their personal views, to request to leave the country, to become educated, to practice any religion, or to pursue any ideas they pleased, or to read whatever they wanted. In such a society, a person concerned with maintaining her personal freedom would not find it possible to externalise, and in some cases even fully develop, her inner concerns. Her personal concerns are thus in conflict with hegemonic social expectations. This means that she must make compromises and most probably she will be dissatisfied with her life. Thus, social expectations are stronger than personal concerns ( $SE > PC$ ) for most people. Less extreme situations also represent ( $SE > PC$ ) such as the social expectations to find a job at the age of fourteen, or to become a criminal in order to survive, etc.

There may well be a contradiction between personal concerns and social expectations. Twenty years ago, no matter how badly the girl from Bucharest or Cracow may have wished to attend church frequently, this most likely remained a dream for her. No matter how much a child in Russia might want to travel to the United States, this most probably would remain a hidden internal conversation, an inner unfulfilled desire. In such instances, some people may make compromises and abandon their dreams, whilst others will try to realise them at any cost. Thus, some people join the 'underground' world,



become dissidents or even martyrs; in some cases, they might try to become illegal immigrants.

The kinds of internal conversations and personal concerns that individuals produce in societies with limited external freedom cannot be the same as those produced by people in societies with higher degrees of external freedom. Individuals have the ability to develop internal conversation and reflective deliberations (and therefore mediation) under any circumstances, but when the social environment is full of difficulties and prohibitions, their internal conversations may be of a different nature from those produced by people who have lived in a social environment with a higher degree of external freedom. This can be shown as follows: in cases of extended negative social expectations, restrictions and prohibitions, inner concerns and personal hierarchies are in conflict with the social expectations and the external environment. Thus, it becomes extremely difficult for an individual to find her inner balance; she feels repressed, unimportant and in constant contradiction with her social environment. In cases where social freedom is limited, the individual has to make continual compromises. For as long as the individual is in a state of inner conflict, the mediation mechanism cannot achieve a stable relationship between internal and external conversation, and therefore the individual cannot achieve fulfilment (as Simmel observes). In cases of extended and continuous inner conflict, individuals cannot develop a 'healthy' mediation mechanism capable of achieving a stable relationship between internal and external conversation. Thus, the complete development of reflexive deliberation may become difficult and, in some cases, impossible.

For example, in Great Britain (amongst other countries), many people display great concern for animal rights through organisations, media discussions etc. In contrast, it would be extremely difficult for a person in Zambia to have similar concerns. A final example can be used to describe the damage that limited external freedom may have on the inner development of the individual. Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, Greece was subject to the Ottoman occupation. During this period, the rest of Europe developed significantly in terms of science, art, democracy, literature and philosophy. However, in most of the Ottoman Empire, including Greece, most people had no contact with the Renaissance or Enlightenment. While they maintained their desire for freedom, the people who lived within the Ottoman Empire, remained in the same social, economic, political and educational conditions for as long as their external and social freedom was limited. Such people certainly produced internal conversations, but in contrast to the concerns and deliberations held by people in free parts of Europe their concerns were more closely related to everyday projects which would enable them to survive.

It should be noted that social expectations and personal concerns may be in conflict even in liberal and democratic societies. For example, a homosexual whose main concern is to explore his sexual identity may find himself in contradiction to his social environment, family, friends and colleagues; or a single mother who wants her child to join a club, but find she is not welcome; or a young girl may be in love with her teacher, but cannot give expression to her feelings.



#### 6.4.2: Personal Concerns and Positive Social Expectations.

The polar opposite of negative social expectations is when social expectations operate in a way which complements personal concerns. In this case, personal concerns are promoted by social expectations; in other words, the social environment promotes the inner freedom of the individual. Naturally, it is difficult to find an example of a society that operates in a state of absolute social freedom. We could posit that a state in which there is a complementarity between social expectations and personal concerns represents an ideal state or society that everyone dreams of (according, of course, to each individual's hierarchies and concerns). However, there are specific personal concerns that social expectations promote and encourage individuals to externalise. In the Netherlands, for example, homosexuals can express themselves more freely than in other countries. Another example would be that of parents who want their children to go to university and become educated. If the children also want to go to university, and this is one of their personal concerns and one of the most important hierarchies for them, then the social environment (namely, their family) responsible for the materialisation of this concern promotes and enables these specific individuals to externalise and realise their inner concerns. An analogous case would be that of a young man with a talent for art; he wants to become an artist and his school recognises his talent and helps him win a scholarship in order to fulfil his desire. Here, we can see that the school (as the responsible institution within society) enables the young man to expand his personal concerns and talent, and advance his internal dialogues about them.

In these cases, which are often situations connected with desire rather than experience, the individual is in balance with herself and the social environment. She feels fulfilled and satisfied, more easily able to externalise parts of her internal conversations, and also able to be reflective in her internal and external conversations. If this relationship between positive social expectations and personal concerns is in balance for an extended period of time, the individual may well experience an inner harmony. While I propose that all individuals have the capacity to be deliberative and that all individuals produce internal conversations, it is clear that, where positive social expectations and hierarchies enable the individual to promote her concerns, the more advanced her mediation mechanism will become and the more 'complex' or complete her reflexive and reflective deliberations will be. Therefore, when social expectations take the form of positive expectations *vis-à-vis* people, the mediation mechanism can operate in a 'freer' way and is able to 'satisfy' the individual's 'wants', instead of compromising the individual's 'wants' in relation to the social 'shoulds'.

I conclude that the more external freedoms an individual has, the more internally free she becomes and, ultimately, the more responsible she becomes for her actions. An individual becomes responsible for her decisions when she has the ability to choose, the option to decide. When an individual chooses to produce an action, rather than having the action imposed on her, she holds the responsibility for her actions. When a social environment offers social freedom to individuals, these individuals must then be conscious of their decisions and be prepared to face the consequences of their actions. In the case of the



parents who support their children's desire to go to university, it is the children's, not the parents', responsibility to do well in their studies. However, if the children do not want to study, but rather are forced to do so, then the larger part of the responsibility would not be their own if they failed to do well. Thus, in cases of positive social expectations, there is complementarity between the social expectations and personal concerns ( $SE \leftrightarrow PC$ ).

#### 6.4.3: Personal Concerns and Neutral Social Expectations.

Between the extremes of the positive and negative ways in which personal concerns and social expectations can be related is the neutral way. Here, the concerns an individual has may not necessarily be related to either positive or negative social expectations. In such cases, the social environment does not inhibit or prohibit the individual from having the specific concern. For example, if a person's concern is to collect butterflies, to be a plane-spotter or play golf, positive or negative social expectations are not necessarily involved. Many concerns that individuals have in their everyday lives may be neutral in relation to social expectations; these concerns may involve a diet, or a new dress that a woman wants to buy, an old friend someone talks to, a new haircut someone would like to try, the colour of a family's new car or the name chosen for a baby. These are concerns that people may reflect upon in their everyday life, but in which social expectations are not necessarily involved. In such instances, social expectations are not as great as personal concerns ( $SE < PC$ ).

In such cases, the individual is responsible for her actions (e.g., to give her baby an unusual name, to choose an extreme haircut, not to start a diet, to spend all her money on new jeans, etc.) and naturally she is free internally and externally to reflect upon those concerns. Therefore, there is indifference between her personal concerns and social expectations. This means that the individual may be able to fulfil her concerns and produce further internal conversations.

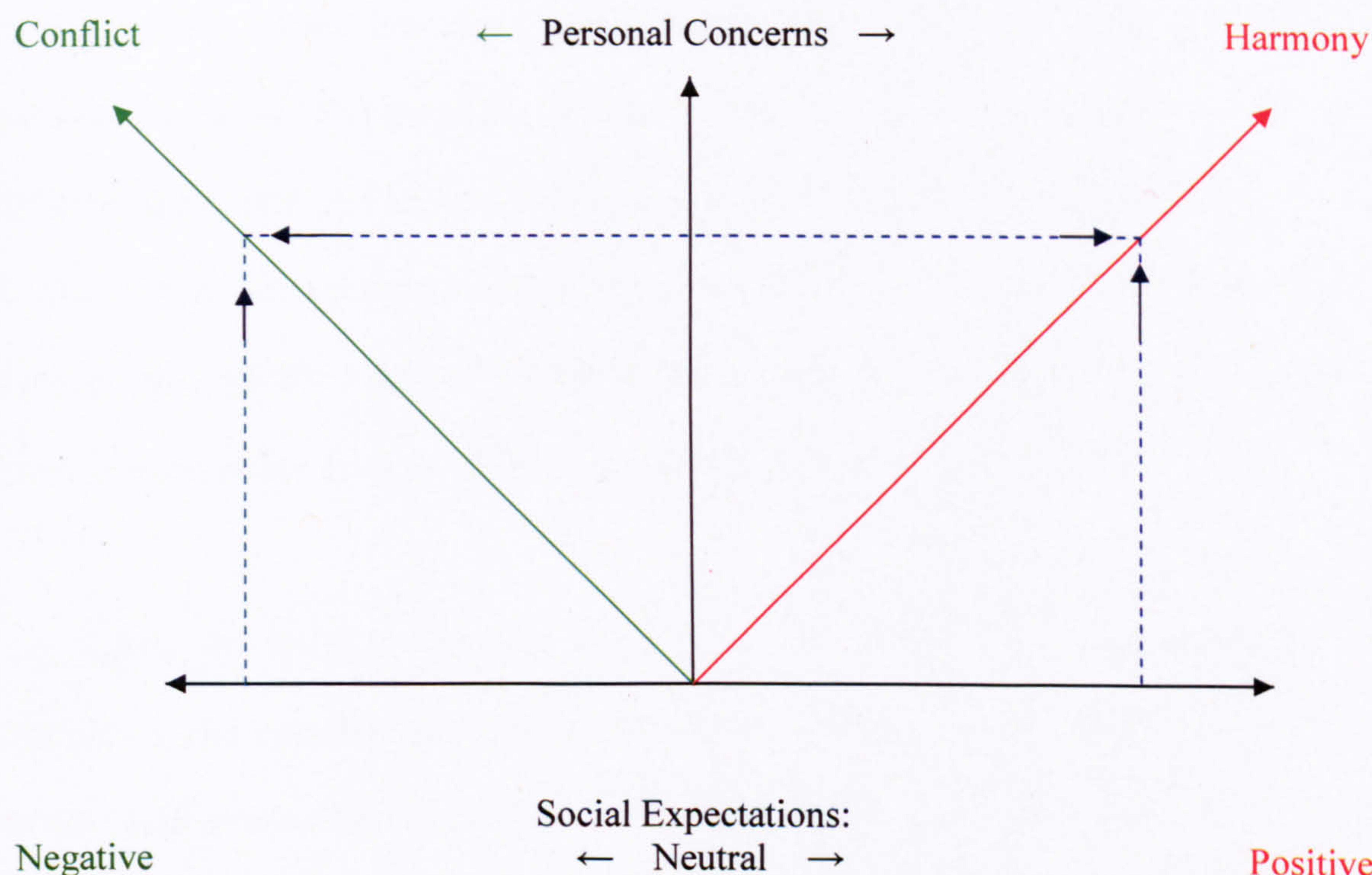
#### 6.4.4: Degrees of Social Expectations.

It should be mentioned that the kinds of relationship between personal concerns and social expectations have been presented in a descriptive rather than a representative way. Generally, as I will discuss in the following chapter, an individual often experiences situations in which her personal concerns are in contradiction to social expectations or where her social concerns may be in complementarity with social expectations. Neutral forms of this relationship can also occur. Thus, in modern societies, the degree of negative and positive social expectations varies, as well as the degree of social freedom. This means that individuals often have to make compromises, and thus achieve a relatively low degree of balance and satisfaction, in order to make their way through life. The ultimate inner balance and maximum satisfaction are states of inner life that cannot be achieved easily or sustained for a long period of time. What usually happens is that our personal concerns and social expectations co-exist, sometimes in conflict and sometimes in harmony. If a person's inner concerns are in complete contradiction to social expectations, however, compromise is not good enough. For example, in Greece,



between 1967 and 1974, democracy was replaced by a military junta. Most people who disagreed with this regime suppressed their personal concerns (related to freedom) and simply attempted to continue everyday life as normal. However, others, who could not survive in such an authoritarian environment, left Greece and returned after the fall of the generals.

The following diagram describes the relationship between social expectations (negative and positive) and personal concerns in terms of inner conflict and inner balance:



This diagram attempts to present how the different degrees of negative and positive social expectations operate. It can be seen (on the left) that, when the degree of negative expectations is high in relation to personal concerns, inner conflict simultaneously increases. Conversely, when the degree of positive social expectations is high in relation



to personal concerns (on the right), inner harmony increases.<sup>7</sup> When social expectations have a neutral relationship with personal concerns, conflict and balance decrease. As I have suggested, everyday life concerns an interplay between internal and external conversation which also involves social expectations and personal concerns: mediation is the factor that makes this relationship work.

### 6.5: Discussion.

In this chapter, I have introduced a basic dichotomy between social expectations, and personal concerns. The personal and the social aspects of mediation constitute two different stages or filters which are interrelated and interconnected. External conversation is first internalised (interpreted and elucidated), then shaped according to the interplay between the specific personal concerns and social expectations which are involved; consequently, either a degree of balance or satisfaction could be achieved<sup>8</sup>.

As regards the interplay between the personal hierarchies and concerns and social hierarchies and expectations, I have shown that there are specific forms according to which their relationship is shaped. In cases of positive social expectations, in which social freedom is limited, personal concerns are in conflict and contradiction with these specific social expectations. This means that compromise is involved as well as low levels of inner freedom and satisfaction. Conversely, in cases of positive social expectations, in which social freedom is higher, there is a complementarity between

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<sup>7</sup> In this diagram the term 'harmony' is used instead of 'balance': if the level of inner balance is high for a continuous period of time, inner harmony is a more appropriate term to describe this state.

<sup>8</sup> This will be analysed more fully in the next chapter.



personal concerns and social expectations; inner balance and satisfaction thus increase significantly. Where there is a neutral relationship between personal concerns and social expectations, there is a state of indifference between them which allows the individual to develop her own concerns without social inhibition or prohibition.

## CHAPTER 7

### Mediation Synthesis.

#### 7: Prolegomena.

I have now introduced the mediation mechanism and discussed its first three stages. In this chapter, further analysis will complete the discussion of personal and social hierarchies, their concerns and expectations begun in the previous chapter and I shall describe the final stages of mediation. I will elaborate further on the notions of conflict, balance, compromise and combination, incorporating a discussion of the relevant degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that mediation may offer. Finally, I shall attempt to present mediation in a synthesised manner, including all stages and processes.

#### 7.1: Stages of Mediation.

In Chapter 6, I introduced the second and third stages of the mediation mechanism, and discussed and compared the contribution to it of personal hierarchies of concerns and social hierarchies of expectations and it was suggested that the personal and the social aspects of the individual make separate contributions to the process of mediation in filtering external conversations. Thus far, I have proposed that external conversation becomes internalised through mediation. Internalisation is the first stage in which the mediation mechanism works to interpret and elucidate external conversation. Subsequently, the internalised external conversation is processed



through an interplay between the two central stages of mediation: personal concerns and social expectations, which are constantly interrelated. The previous chapter supplied preliminary discussion about the ways that personal concerns are related to social expectations; here, a more comprehensive analysis will explain the importance of these two specific stages of mediation. I will then introduce the fourth stage of mediation, which involves aspects of balance, satisfaction and conflict, and discuss satisfaction and dissatisfaction which form the fifth stage of the mediation mechanism.

## 7.2: Fourth stage of Mediation.

### 7.2.1: The combination of Personal Concerns and Social Expectations.

Reality is much more complex than an individual having either personal concerns or encountering social expectations and simply thinking them through. As I have suggested, mediation usually operates both as a combination of the social and personal stages and as the combination of many other factors. Clearly, even personal concerns have elements deriving from social normativity and *vice versa*. A person's decision to be a good parent is not an exclusively personal concern: it is also a social priority. Equally, when someone tries hard to behave as a 'good' Christian, this not only reflects the individual's social context (i.e. Christian rather than Hindu), but also demonstrates that he has chosen this priority as his primary concern. It can be seen that there is an interplay between the two mediation functions; each individual tries to find a combined way to relate these two poles. It is not possible for an individual to act solely according to social expectations, and to neglect personal preferences, or

*vice versa*. Thus, elements from both mediation stages constitute each person's mediation process. For example, if a teenager feels it extremely important to be liked by his neighbourhood peer group, he will think about and prioritise his activities according to this, his most important concern. At the same time, however, it is the teenager who has made this choice (i.e., to consider these specific other teenagers important). Others of the same age might consider it more important to expend their efforts on studying and going to university, others to be popular at school; others may be shy and completely isolated, etc. Every priority each individual endorses entails social and personal characteristics.

Goffman used the terms 'mediator' and 'go-between' to refer to a person who translates the differences between a listener and a speaker (or between two groups) in order to eliminate misunderstandings, to save time and find the balance between them. This is how mediation can be understood at this point: as the moderator between social and personal hierarchies that tries to combine elements from both sides in order for a common priority to be followed. An example may demonstrate this clearly: a woman who has spent thirty years with her husband has chosen to place him at the top of her hierarchy of concerns. This can be seen to constitute the personal aspect of mediation, especially if we add to the example the fact that this woman has never been independent: she is extremely insecure and cannot make a decision by herself. If we examine this situation in more detail, however, we can also see the social character of her mediation process, namely the way she grew up (in a particular family where the father was the only authority and her mother always obeyed him), her education (in a conservative, old-fashioned, all-girls school), her role-models and friends (good and loyal housewives) etc. In every example, we can see a combination or interplay



between the social and the personal aspects of mediation which derives from the interplay between internal and external conversation.

As the example above shows, the housewife's life makes sense to her. Her personal hierarchy of concerns, her choices and actions are made according to what feels 'right' to *her*. This does not mean that she can necessarily articulate why her life is around in this specific way. The decisions people make in their lives are often the outcome of a combination of internal and external values and principles. A 'good' Christian or Muslim can simultaneously be a proper father, a proper husband, a proper salesman, a proper son, a person to rely on, a person ready to offer help. The above description is the outcome of a combination of personal and social characteristics which can co-exist in a balanced and stable way. I shall now examine how this description of mediation could be illustrated during an internal conversation which then becomes external. The following conversation is that of a housewife who is buying a new dress for a forthcoming children's party:

A1: It's always nice to wear something new. I am so bored with my old dresses.

A2: I must be careful, though, because everyone is going to be invited to Junior's party.

A3: Look at this bright red dress. I love red! It was my favourite colour in high school!

A4: Well, it has been a while since then... I am not young and slim any more.

A5: Ah! This long dark green dress seems like a safe choice! ... or my mother's choice!

A6: I'm not that old! I can wear something lighter and happier.

A7: Hmm... This short red skirt and black soft sweater look great on me!

A8: Who am I kidding? Bob hates short skirts, I am a fat mother and I am going to Junior's party with my daughter.

A9: Where's that long green dress?

In this example we can see how an individual uses the mediation process to combine her personal and social expectations which she recognises. Although she likes the red skirt, she decides to buy a dress she does not particularly like because it is a 'safe' choice. Her husband would like it because it is long, her mother would like it; it is appropriate for a woman of her age and weight and will make for a good/indifferent appearance for the party. For all these reasons put together in her process of mediation, the housewife will ask for the green dress and then she will buy it; she will agree with everyone that it is a nice dress and that it suits her, and she will wear it again to the next party without any excitement. This individual makes a compromise: she buys a dress that she does not especially like in order to avoid complications in her social environment. Thus, through internal conversation, the mediation mechanism has operated in a way that has kept the housewife 'on the right track'; although she wanted to reverse the 'decision' according to her personal inclinations rather than in conformity with acknowledged social expectations, she chose not to. Thus, the mediation mechanism operated successfully<sup>1</sup>.

It must be emphasised that the individual deliberates upon social expectations *per se*. This means that the individual internalises any given social expectation and produces relevant internal conversations about it. In that way the individual decides whether or

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<sup>1</sup> It might also be said that mediation can be understood as the sense each of us usually has of 'what makes sense' or 'what feels right'. In this example, this housewife did what 'made better sense' to her. Her mediation mechanism 'directed' her to the appropriate decision and she achieved a significant degree of balance. In this way, individuals deliberate upon social expectations and personal concerns and try to achieve a degree of balance between them. Each individual chooses her own personal concerns, whereas social expectations are more or less given.



not she should pay attention and actually care about a certain social expectation. For example, many women in contemporary societies evaluate different social expectations sufficiently to conform to, in different ways. Thus, some women would consider the social expectation concerning marriageable age to be important: they would do their best to be in a serious relationship and have a family around the age of thirty. For other women, this is not so important; however they may evaluate another social expectation in different terms, namely, that women should now be independent, pursue a good career and earn good money. These women, therefore, are more concerned with having a good career than having a family. It can thus be seen that individuals need to justify each social expectation and decide whether or not it is important to them. At the same time, as soon as an individual has identified the nature of the social expectation and deliberated on it, there is a further element: whether or not she will do something about it. In the above case regarding the social expectation of women being married by the age of thirty, some women might consider it important: of these, some will actively attempt to marry as soon as they can, but others may do nothing to precipitate marriage. For these women, being married before the age of thirty might sound appropriate, but they would prefer to fall in love before they decide to have a family even if that means that they wait longer before marrying. In such cases, the individual is actually engaged in internal conversation; although this specific social expectation is something that she cares about, she will not actively do anything about it; rather she will hope for things to improve, to meet new people, to wait for others to appreciate her personality, etc.

This particular social expectation is self-reproducing, because a significant number of women seem to think that it is 'correct'. The internal conversations related to the fact

that a woman is getting older (that ‘the clock is ticking’, and that after thirty a woman cannot have children as easily) are the reasons that this specific social expectation is reproduced. In the past, it was expected in many societies that a woman would marry before the age of twenty. During the time that this social expectation was being transformed, through internal conversation, *inter alia*, it remained important for women (and for their families) to marry young. More recently, social expectations have changed, because social circumstances, as well as internal conversations, have altered. This means that the present social expectation may also be subject to change as soon as women internalise and transform it into internal conversation and inner concern. If women do not care about what age they are ‘supposed’ to get married, this specific social expectation will cease to be reproduced. This illustrates the fact that not all social expectations become internalised and not all people deliberate upon them in the same way. Combination is one way of viewing this phenomenon, but I shall also examine additional factors.

#### 7.2.2: Clarification (agreement between Social and Personal Characteristics).

Before continuing, I must clarify one point concerning the mediation mechanism. The way I have described it so far may make it appear much like Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ or Mead’s ‘generalised other’. However, Goffman’s ‘go-between’ is a more appropriate analogue for mediation. As I have previously mentioned, Goffman views the ‘go-between’ or the ‘mediator’ as one who tries to find the balance between a speaker and a listener. At the same time, as Goffman observes, a mediator is not neutral<sup>2</sup>. The mediator may take sides, may ‘work’ in favour of one party or the other; the

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2 for a full discussion.



‘mediator’ may simply agree with the listener or the speaker and act accordingly. This is precisely what happens with the mediation mechanism described above. This mechanism is not neutral: it is not purely social and it is not exclusively personal. Each person’s mediation mechanism has a unique function and identity. The uniqueness of this mechanism does not derive from the social characteristics of the mediation, but from the personal (which is the source of each individual’s uniqueness). The social characteristics are available to everyone and anyone can use, adopt and perform them, yet each person does not do so in the same way. This is because of the hierarchical personal concerns of the individual. However, this applies only in cases where personal concerns have a neutral relationship with social expectations or there is a complementarity between social expectations and personal concerns. In instances where negative social expectations are greater than personal concerns, the above cannot apply. Therefore, what I propose is that *the personal character of the mediation process has to agree with the social and not vice versa*.

Further justification of this proposition is needed. Campbell (1996) raises a central problem within social theory concerning the definition of action. He suggests that ‘action’ and ‘social action’ are different terms, which are used in social theory as though they carry the same meaning. Campbell states that ‘it is rather a matter of three concepts being reduced to two since Weber’s original scheme distinguished between behaviour, action and social action, whilst contemporary discussions typically only refer to behaviour and social action’ (1996: 25). He explains that social action is a sub-type within the wider meaning of action and adds that, in social theory, behaviour is understood as a reactive response, and action is defined as voluntary and subjective meaningful conduct. He concludes that social theory should investigate the agential

properties of action and explain where action derives from. For Campbell, social theory understands action as *social* action, whereas these two notions do not in fact coincide. My analysis provides an answer about the origins of action, as distinct from social action.

In order to clarify this, let us consider the example of an adult homosexual who has realised her sexual identity and produces internal conversations about it. In most Western countries, homosexuality is not penalised and, in some European countries (e.g., the U.K., the Netherlands) and some states in the U.S.A. (e.g., Massachusetts, California), marriages or registered partnerships between adult homosexuals are respected by the law. In these places, social expectations about homosexuality are not in contradiction with the personal concerns of homosexuals and homosexuals from other countries may dream of living in such liberal societies. However, despite this acceptance, many homosexuals living in these liberal societies do not reveal their sexual identity; like many homosexuals in less liberal societies, they pretend to be heterosexual.

This example provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate why the personal character of the mediation process has to agree with the social character and not *vice versa*. Being a homosexual is a personal decision which derives from the subject's inner life. Some societies provide a better, more tolerant and friendly environment for homosexuals in order to treat them as equals. Yet, although such general social expectations provide a positive environment, some homosexuals decide not to externalise their sexual concerns. This is because the personal character of a homosexual's mediation mechanism might not give 'permission' for externalisation.



Therefore, while the social character of mediation provides a positive environment, the individual resists and does not externalise her internal conversation, although 'society' appears ready to accept her. Let us try to formulate a realistic reason for why a person might do this.

In the U.K., homosexuality is not illegal. Some people may approve of this and others may not, but the fact remains that adult homosexuals can have relationships perfectly legally. However, as I have suggested above, some homosexuals do not 'use their rights' and do not tell their family, friends and employers that they are homosexuals. This may be because, while 'society' might be ready to accept them, these people understand that their family and friends may not. Consequently, they prefer not to externalise such a personal issue. Thus, even when the social characteristics of mediation encourage the individual to act in a particular way for her own benefit, or when society is indifferent, the individual might not respond accordingly. This is because *the hierarchy of personal concerns must be in accord with the general social expectations and the institutions through which they are expressed*. In this example, social expectations are compatible with personal concerns, but the mediation mechanism has not externalised internal conversation. Similar examples arise in other cases, for instance, the fact that many victims of domestic violence do not report their situation even though they know that the state will protect them, or women who have been raped yet fail to report the incident despite the fact that the law will protect them. It can thus be seen that it is not enough for the social environment to agree with the personal concerns and provide confirmation, help or support. The individual must decide to avail herself of such help or, in other words, her personal concerns must

agree with the social expectations. The process of mediation is what makes the difference between individuals' actions.

It might be said that the above examples refer only to extreme situations and thus do not constitute representative or convincing examples. I shall now, therefore, provide an example in which an individual could externalise her inner concerns, but chooses not to, despite the best possible external environment. Many individuals request the help of a psychotherapist to deal with their concerns and problems. It is usually the individual's decision to see a therapist and she may pay her/him in order to be 'treated'. The first thing that a therapist says to the 'patient' is that she must trust the therapist, be honest and 'externalise' all her inner concerns, say everything that is related to the specific problem and provide true and accurate answers. That is the only way that the therapist will be able to help. In other words, the therapist is telling the patient not to control her mediation system, but to allow herself to externalise her internal conversation. Some individuals follow the therapist's advice; others do not. In psychoanalysis, a branch of psychotherapy, the situation in which a patient will not let herself be 'free' is known as 'resistance'. Even in cases where the individual has asked for support and actively tried to find her 'inner balance', therefore, she might not externalise her inner thoughts and conversations. That is because *the personal character of the mediation process has to agree with the social and not vice versa*.

In some societies, such as authoritarian societies, extremely poor societies or societies involved in war, etc., individuals do not have the choice of acting in the way that they want to. Cases in which social expectations are in complete contradiction with personal concerns (such as paedophilia and other pathological conditions) are beyond



the scope of my analysis. However, even in free societies, there are occasions when adult individuals follow, reproduce and believe in the prevailing social expectations, structures or institutions, and therefore become parts and components of social forms. In such cases, adults are not actively compelled to become (for example) Muslims or Christians, ecologists or feminists; rather they become part of such social forms because they want to, or because this is what they have learned, or simply because this is what other people are doing. Given that not all strive to be Muslims, Christians, ecologists, feminists, etc., this means that individuals have the ability to *choose*. They can maintain their beliefs for ever or change their minds later. What remains crucial is the fact that individuals have the option to choose which social expectation to consider, change, follow or reject, and this has to do with the personal concerns of the individual at any given time, what she cares about and what is important to her. Thus the individual will choose to follow a social expectation that can be combined with her personal concerns rather than one which is in complete contradiction. For example, if someone prioritises the safety of her family, and this is her main concern, she will not choose to move to Baghdad. However, someone who believes in freedom at any cost, and who actively wants to fight for it, might well choose to travel to Baghdad and actively help the Iraqi people.

Thus, with reference to contemporary societies, in which most personal concerns are not in constant conflict with social expectations, I suggest that the personal character of the mediation process must agree with the social and not *vice versa*. In the opposing scenario, we could simply repeat a Freudian concept of the individual: the individual must fit into society, its social rules and structures, and therefore must repress herself to do so. In such a situation, the individual would have to 'shape' and

adjust her personality to meet social expectations or the social priorities of the mediation process. Indeed, in their different ways most social theorists would agree with Freud's statement that the individual has to adjust to society and not *vice versa*<sup>3</sup>. Mead, Dewey, Bourdieu, Giddens, Simmel, Goffman, even Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Foucault and many other prominent social theorists, conceive the individual to be a social component, a part of the social order, and would agree that the mediation process is nothing more than a collection of social characteristics, such as social expectations, norms, institutional requirements and values, that reproduce the existing order. However, where does that leave the more vital and basic questions one has to ask: 'Why am I acting according to this social hierarchy and not another (e.g. the legal rather than the criminal)?' 'Why do my actions differ from those of others?' 'Why are my priorities different from those of others?'

At this exact point, I believe that I have something different to suggest, namely that the mediation mechanism (in social environments which are not in complete contradiction with personal concerns) can be perceived as the combination of personal and social characteristics, the personal characteristics being those that have to accord with the social and not *vice versa*. As I have proposed, external conversation, i.e., communication, interactions etc., derive from internal conversation. As a concept, internal conversation does not solely and exclusively comprise the individual's thoughts, ideas, worries, dreams, representations, etc.: it can and usually does include social elements, such as conventional arguments, needs, expectations etc. The interplay between them constitutes internal conversation (as shown in the examples used in the present work). However, what differentiates internal from external

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<sup>3</sup> They would, however, disagree with his central argument that the individual's main concern is her sexual repression.



conversation is clearly not the social aspect of the conversation, but the personal. Internal conversation involves private, personal, undisclosed aspects of the individual's self that external conversation might not entail. In particular, it is possible to include all the social aspects of the person's internal conversation, but it is impossible to specify all the personal elements of each internal conversation.

The mediation mechanism is the process that 'permits' and 'decides' which part of internal conversation will become external. As discussed earlier, internal conversation may involve social arguments, ideas, views, beliefs, theories, etc. The mediation process effectively tries to maintain a balance between the social and the private characteristics. The main task, however, is not to try to externalise the social character of the internal conversation in an appropriate form, but to attempt to filter the personal and private character of the individual and to externalise only the 'appropriate' part of the individual's internal conversation.

An example might be that of the internal conversation of a schoolgirl who is in love with her teacher and who tries to find ways to show him her feelings (that is, to externalise her internal conversation/concerns etc.). In this case, it is being supported that her mediation mechanism has combined her social and private hierarchies in such a way that her priority as a 'proper' schoolgirl is important to her.

A1: He is so quiet and kind and handsome.

A2: He is nothing like the boys I am dating.

A3: Although he is not young, he has new ideas and his class *is* the best.

A4: I wish I could be with him and learn more about him.

A5: I bet he has a girlfriend! He doesn't wear a wedding ring though, thank God!

A6: I might have a chance... but he is my teacher. He would never do anything inappropriate with his student.

A7: What if I changed schools? Then he wouldn't be my teacher and maybe he could see me as a woman!

A8: How could he see a seventeen year old girl as a woman?

A9: I have to make him admire my determination to become someone important!

A10: If I could convince him that I am mature and feel older, then he would see me as a woman! That's it! I will go to a better university than the one he went to and that will make him admire me and my mature attitude!

In this example, we see a schoolgirl who tries to find ways to approach her teacher. Her internal conversation consists of personal and social characteristics. When she expresses her feelings for the teacher, she enunciates a personal and private internal conversation. However, when she debates the fact that the teacher would never go out with her or that he might have a girlfriend, these are social characteristics that she could share with a close friend. Nevertheless, she would never confide in her friend about her plan to make the teacher admire her. Let us examine a possible external conversation of the same schoolgirl with her teacher:

A1: Mr Smith, I was thinking seriously about my future and I would like your advice.

B1: Sure.

A2: I have decided that I want to become a solicitor and I think that London University is most appropriate for me.

B2: That's very good! You know you'll have to work hard.

A3: I will make it: I always work hard.

B3: Good for you then.

A4: Did you take your degree at Leeds?

B4: Yes, some time ago!

A5: But London is better, isn't it?



B5: Sure! Go for it, and good luck.

The important part of this external conversation is what the girl decides to externalise and not so much how the teacher responds. She wants to try to impress her teacher with an important announcement, so she decides to tell him that she wants to become a solicitor and study at London University, which she thinks is better than Leeds. Whether she succeeds in impressing the teacher or not is of little importance: what is important is the relationship between her internal and external conversation. Her intention was to make the teacher believe her to be a serious young woman with ambitions. Her initial intention, though, was her private, personal and hidden need to make the teacher like her. In order to do that, she does not say how much she likes him, how attractive and mature she thinks he is, how much she wants to know him better. Instead she externalises her plans to become a solicitor and to study in a better university than the one her teacher attended. How is the source of external conversation (i.e., internal conversation) connected with what she externalises? The answer is the mediation mechanism.

The mediation mechanism operates according to the combination of private concerns and social expectations; the outcome of this combination may be a system of principle or self-image. In the above example, the schoolgirl combines her personal concerns and social expectations and crystallises them in her need to be considered a 'proper' schoolgirl. Her mediation system operates according to this priority. Thus, at a specific time, she combines her personal concerns, desires and thoughts (i.e., her feelings for her teacher) with the social expectations she considers important (i.e., to be perceived as a decent, polite, mature schoolgirl who respects her teachers and would never 'cross the line' between herself and them). She is also a much loved

daughter with good manners who does not want to disappoint her parents, a young girl who wants to make a difference in her social (school and family) environment. The mechanism of mediation combines all the personal and social priorities this schoolgirl has and 'guides' her internal conversation towards the most appropriate form of external expression. She keeps almost the whole of her internal conversation unspoken, only externalising the last part of it in an appropriate and polite way. The decision about what will remain unspoken and what will be externalised has been made through the mediation mechanism. Like Goffman's 'go-between', the mediator has internalised both the listener and the speaker during the girl's internal conversation and, after processing the relevant aspects, 'decided' which part of the internal conversation should be externalised and in what way. It must be noted, however, that the social characteristics of the girl's internal conversation are externalised more easily than her personal characteristics.

It can be said that, if the schoolgirl had had a different combination of personal and social desiderata in her mediation mechanism, and if her priority was, for example, to be accepted by everybody at any cost, then her internal and external conversation and her subsequent action would have been different. It is, however, this girl's unique combination of characteristics that have guided her to act in the way she does.

I believe that the mediation mechanism is initially derived from each person's personal concerns and priorities, but that these concerns always have to be combined in a balanced way with social expectations and institutional conventions. If an individual chooses to act in accordance with her personal concerns, and ignores the social expectations and priorities of her mediation, then she might be characterised as



egotistical, or even clinically unstable. Conversely, even if there are people whose social concerns and priorities are greater than their personal ones, such people's source of action, decision and externalisation is also private and personal. It may be hidden, but it certainly exists. I am not aware of any person, clinical case or deviant behaviour according to which the individual has no concern whatsoever about what she perceives as her personal priorities<sup>4</sup>.

What I am suggesting, therefore, is that the individual tries to combine personal concerns with social expectations in such a way that a degree of inner balance can be achieved. As previously discussed, a degree of inner balance can be achieved on occasions when social expectations have a neutral relationship with personal concerns or when there is a complementarity between personal and social hierarchies. At the same time, it must be noted that, even in cases of conflict, a degree of inner balance (even if it is ephemeral) must be achieved, otherwise the individual finds herself in an imbalanced and unstable situation in which she cannot easily operate. I propose that, in cases where a degree of inner balance, albeit ephemeral, is achievable, personal concerns and hierarchies are prioritised and social expectations and hierarchies follow. Even on occasions where it would seem that social expectations do come first (an individual being constantly polite; someone who joins a social institution, such as the army or religious organisation, and acts accordingly; performing such kind of

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<sup>4</sup> Another question that could be raised at this point is, even if the personal character of the mediation has to agree with the social character of it and not *vice versa*, and even if the individual is the one who chooses her way to adjust to the social environment and not *vice versa*, where does this personal character derive from? In my opinion, this question may be the most important so far raised. The answer, however, is neither straightforward nor clear. The question has become a central concern of psychology, biology and various other sciences; basically, it asks why an individual has certain characteristics and not others. The origins of many of the characteristics and priorities each individual possesses can be explained, but others cannot, and the issue of where the personal character of the mediation process derives from is one of them. However, these questions do not constitute the scope of my study.

social role in the best possible way), it is the individual's choice to do so. In cases of limited or non-existent external freedom, that is when subject to coercion, (a teenage daughter whose father refuses to give any allowance; going to jail for criminal activities; having to wear specific clothes in certain countries), the individual is suppressed and a specific action imposed on her (the levels of suppression can significantly vary.) In all other cases, I suggest that it is personal concerns and hierarchies that must agree with social expectations and hierarchies and not *vice versa*.

### 7.2.3: The Conflict between Personal Concerns and Social Expectations.

In the section on the combination of personal concerns with social expectations, I described how mediation functions in instances or periods of 'harmony', to use a Simmelian term. According to Simmel, if the individual can find the balance between her internal and external cosmos, she can then progress and develop. What happens, however, when people cannot achieve any degree of this internal harmony and balance? In such cases, it is possible that personal and social priorities are in conflict. The different natures of the social and personal aspects of mediation and of the entire internal cosmos of the individual do not always work in combination. Inevitably, they may also be in conflict.

Individuals usually try to balance their social and private priorities, but sometimes this is not easy. There are times when what a person wants is completely inappropriate for her society (as Goffman might say) and therefore conflict within the person is inevitable (in Simmel's terms). This is the point at which the mediation process



cannot achieve the desired balance. Similarly, there may be occasions when the social character of an individual's priority might be completely at variance with the individual's personal principles. In such cases, the mediation process functions in a distinctive way: a long and sometimes painful internal conversation begins inside the individual, its main aim being to reach a conclusion, a decision, a persuasive outcome (for the individual), in order to be transformed into external conversation and possibly into action. This internal conversation can be viewed as a debate between the social expectations and hierarchies of mediation (i.e., what is socially 'appropriate', 'desired') and the personal concerns and hierarchies of mediation (what it is that the individual actually wants and desires)<sup>5</sup>. In addition to the verbal debates, these internal conversations may also involve strong feelings, icons, representations, etc.

These feelings could be involved for many different reasons. For example, they may reflect the individual's anxiety about the fact that she cannot make up her mind about a specific issue. This individual may feel repressed (because a part of her internal process is repressed); she may be worried, because she cannot find the way out of her endless internal conversation; she may be angry, since every conflict involves anger. This individual may also feel confused, lost, insecure and unstable, and many other related feelings which are connected with an extensive period of a conflicting internal conversation. This internal conversation may seem like a fight between two different aspects of the individual's inner life; the individual's personal hierarchy of concerns and the individual's internalised social priorities.

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<sup>5</sup> There are many instances in which what the individual needs is not clear and thus a different kind of internal conversation may be involved.

A typical example of such conflict might involve a focus on an individual's sexual preference. Many people's sexual identity is the outcome of a balanced combination of the individual's personal concerns and social expectations. However, for some, it is the result of a conflict between their social and personal priorities. A homosexual might desire to place her sexual preferences as the main priority in her life and act accordingly. However, this cannot easily be done (unlike a parent's concern to be a good father), since this person's sexual self-expression may not be socially acceptable. This can happen because a homosexual cannot dress, talk, walk, act and express herself freely at any given time within all social environments. In addition, she may not feel comfortable with her family; some might even argue that a homosexual cannot have a 'proper' family in a given social environment, no matter how much she wants to. This individual's personal priority, which may be her sexual identity, might thus be in conflict with her social hierarchical social positions and associated desires (to be a good daughter, to be a 'proper' professional or, in some cases, a parent). Some might say that the sexual life of an individual is a personal matter which has to be resolved exclusively by the individual concerned and, indeed, as long as an individual is in balance with herself regarding her sexual identity, no problems should arise. However, this would be the case only if the individual cared exclusively about her primary personal concerns and did not consider social acceptance to be an important issue.

In the example of a homosexual, we might note the following: first, it is commonplace that, in order for an individual to accept her sexual identity, an outcome of an internal conflict is required. When this person has accepted herself, she subsequently has to decide whether or not she will share her identity with others and, if so, with which



others. Those decisions are the outcome of internal conflicts; conflicts that produce internal conversations such as the following:

A1: How will my parents and friends react?

A2: Will I disappoint them? Will they stop trusting me? Will they stop loving me?

A3: What is more important? Their acceptance or my right to be what I am?

A4: What if they reject me? Will I be alone? Who could I talk to about this?

A5: Maybe I should keep my identity only for those who can really accept me for who I am. But, if I don't tell my friends and family, I will never give them the chance to accept me.

A6: If I tell them, I will have to be ready to answer a million questions from them. But I do not have to know all the answers. Who does? How can I make them see that I am a better and happier person? How can I make them be happy for me?

Such internal conversations might be endless. The individual will keep reproducing them until she feels that she can move on and somehow find the way to combine her personal and social priorities. In the above example, the whole internal conversation had to do with two conflicting desires of the individual: 1) her desire to be who she is, and 2) her desire to be accepted by her friends and family *for* who she is. Her next step would be society's acceptance of who she is and not for what society wants her to be. Clearly, there is neither an easy answer to such questions nor an easy way out of these periods of internal conflict. This is one of the main reasons that people ask for professional help, turning to psychotherapy and counselling. The help such techniques offer acts as an additional mediator between the individual's conflicting concerns. The psychotherapist takes the role of the Goffmanian 'go-between' who tries to find the balance between the parts of the individual that cannot 'agree', 'find a conclusion', 'make a decision', proceed to the next level or leave something behind, etc.

Psychotherapy can be regarded as an external mediation mechanism which seeks gradual internalisation and eventual adjustment to the individual's already existing mediation mechanism<sup>6</sup>. Psychotherapy does not provide answers; rather it facilitates the individual in finding the answers for herself, and this is precisely what each individual's mediation mechanism does: it shows the individual the path to follow to reach a conclusion by internal conversation. Mediation itself is not the destination; it is the means to the destination.

It is difficult to represent exactly how conflict within the mediation mechanism operates, since many different kinds of conflicts can appear in a person's life and there are even more ways that individuals employ to deal with them. What can be said, however, is that internal conversation is generally involved, because there are usually two opposing points of view. One part of the conversation derives from the personal, inner, private aspect of the individual and 'defends' the view that 'personal' concerns and hierarchies might set. In the above example, the personal hierarchy of the individual is her desire to be who she is and to act according to her sexual identity. The other part of the conversation derives from the social aspect of the individual and 'defends' the views of the 'social' expectations and hierarchies with which she is involved. In this example, the social priority is the individual's desire to be accepted by her social environment for what she is. Thus, the above description might be presented as follows:

Internal conversation between

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<sup>6</sup> This is, of course, true on some occasions, but not at all times. Psychotherapy has many applications, only one of which can be seen as the 'additional mediator' on top of the individual's mediation mechanism.



Personal Primary Concerns →← Social Institutional normativity  
Mediation/Conflict

In such situations, mediation can be understood not so much the exact internal dialogues within the individual, but as the abstract negative, unpleasant, and disturbing feeling of anxiety that the individual experiences about a situation. Thus, even though the individual must go through endless internal conversations and debates, in which she must internally argue, disagree, be upset or even cry, she may not be in position to vocalise all these unpleasant experiences. It is possible just to say, 'I feel very bad about it'.

As previously discussed, in cases where social and external freedom are limited and negative social expectations are greater than personal concerns, the individual is in constant conflict and contradiction with her social environment. Relevant compromises have to take place and, if this is not possible, the individual has to escape the social environment that suppresses her, or she will end up being extremely dissatisfied, unhappy or depressed. In extreme situations, people may even become deviants, criminals or pathologically unstable. Constant inner conflicts cause inner instability and imbalance. Such situations are faced by many people in various ways: a young teenager might become a runaway; someone may become a refugee or a fugitive; others may face such difficulties by seeing a therapist, searching for God, or taking medicine – even illicit drugs). On such occasions, when the mediation mechanism is disorientated and unable to operate in favour of the individual, some sort of external help may prove useful.

Conversely, positive social expectations might be involved; one might say that 'society' 'rewards' some people's social priorities (e.g., being polite) and penalises other kinds of priorities other people might endorse (e.g., always being honest and direct). Each individual knows that some of her priorities (e.g., excessive smoking and alcohol consumption) could make her life difficult because her social environment does not approve and might penalise her concerns or desires. Thus, it remains for the individual to decide if she will keep this specific concern as an important element in her priority system and thus 'pay the price', or if she will change the way she perceives her concerns, or even 'hide' the fact that she drinks or smokes. Therefore the individual's personal concerns and priorities will direct whether or not she will follow society's norms. In either case, an inner conflict is experienced by the individual and differing levels of conflict may lead to different operations of the mediation mechanism.

There are many reasons why a person may experience such internal conflict and the unstable and imbalanced condition of the mediation process. This is why such an individual will enter a long period of internal conversation which cannot lead to a resolution; even if it does, this truce can easily be changed. This person will continue to work through her imbalanced mediation process until she is able to make it work 'properly' and complete her inner interplay, resulting in a liveable degree of harmony.

To clarify this, let us consider the example of a young student who begins her Ph.D. at Cambridge University. She becomes an active member of the student community and enjoys the privilege (as she perceives it) of being associated with such a prestigious university. When she receives her Ph.D., she tries to get a research fellowship,



applying only to Cambridge: she will be satisfied only by remaining a member of this university. She does not succeed, but she keeps on trying, and after a year she gets a fellowship. Having achieved an inner balance (and a state of inner satisfaction and possibly happiness), she spends few more years at Cambridge, having convinced herself that this is the most appropriate place for her. She buys a house and she plans an academic future at this university. Eventually, the fellowship ends, and the university rejects her applications for other opportunities. She realises that she must get a job elsewhere. She finds a lectureship at Leeds, which she believes to be a less prestigious university, and convinces herself to move there for few years until a position becomes available at Cambridge. Seven years pass, but the position she wants does not become vacant or she does not get offered it. She is now a respected senior academic at Leeds, who owns a house in Cambridge and rents a small flat in Leeds. For seven years she has spent three days in Leeds and four in Cambridge. She still hopes that one day she will return to Cambridge. Pending that, she continues to commute from Cambridge to Leeds.

This woman is in a state of constant inner conflict. She wants to live in Cambridge: she will find her inner balance only when she obtains a place at this university, and she travels every week so she can continue to make her home in Cambridge. Although she has a permanent post in Leeds, it is inconceivable for her to buy a house and accept the fact that her career will continue there. Unless she finds a way to move to Cambridge permanently, this person will feel incomplete and dissatisfied. This example shows someone being in inner conflict and at the same time living with it. This state of inner conflict may continue for as long as it takes this person to find her inner harmony and balance, which may be a long time or never.

### 7.3 Fifth stage: Inner Balance and Satisfaction or Inner Conflict and Dissatisfaction.

A person may have many reasons to 'feel bad', but it does not necessarily follow that she is experiencing an internal conflict between her social and personal 'shoulds' and 'wants'. An individual may, for example, experience extremely unpleasant feelings through bereavement, or a painful break up with a partner, or a fight (external this time) with another person; other catalysts may include hearing bad news, being disappointed about a specific development, or even receiving an unexpected bill. In these instances, too, mediation is the mechanism responsible for making the individual 'feel better'.

These instances refer to external factors that may activate the mediation process. Thus, it can be said that mediation has an additional function: to try to achieve balance between the existing harmony of the individual and the 'invasion' of an external unwanted/unpleasant factor. For example, when an individual receives a negative evaluation of the progress of her work, she will clearly feel bad about it, but simultaneously her internal mediation mechanism will be activated and an internal conversation begins concerning the external reason for her negative feelings. In this situation, she may produce the following internal conversation:

A1: Oh my God! I am inadequate! So the research I have been doing all this time is completely useless?

A2: This means that I have no connection with reality!

A3: I thought I was doing well, but apparently all I have done is to write an irrelevant chapter.



A4: Oh well... Anybody can write an irrelevant chapter. Who writes a good chapter at the first attempt?

A5: I have to do it again. So what? That is the point! To improve. Otherwise I would get everything right first time!

A6: I have to work hard, maybe double the hours of studying.

A7: This chapter will put me behind schedule! ... but I never liked it: it is so boring.

A8: That is why I did so badly with it. ... Pull yourself together and start writing it again!

This example shows that the mediation mechanism can work to internalise an external stimulus (unpleasant factor) and deal with it in such way that the individual will feel better about the situation and thus achieve 're-equilibration'. In this case, after careful reasoning, the individual concludes that perhaps she deserved the negative comments, and will in fact benefit from them. Unpleasant external stimuli are not always internalised in this way. In the above example, the individual may have perfection as a personal concern, and would thus be more upset about the negative evaluation. Similarly, if her personal concern is the desire to be very honest with her parents, and therefore to tell them about the negative feedback she has received, she would be less likely to be so calm about it. We can again see that the internalisation of a specific incident takes place according to the hierarchy system (with its social and personal aspects) of the particular individual involved. A different individual, with a mediation system involving different hierarchies, might well internalise the same incident in a different way.

Of course, individuals have to internalise, and find balanced ways to 'place' within themselves, much more unpleasant and serious incidents than the one used in the above example. On such occasions, painful internal conversations take place, and

often people will try to find answers to questions that cannot be answered; conversely, other individuals try to find something inside themselves to give them hope and strength. In a case of bereavement, an individual may have endless internal conversations over a long period of time as she tries to realise what has happened and why. During this period, the mediation mechanism tries to find ways to make the person feel better. Often, the individual feels better when she is able to make sense of what has happened (again through her hierarchy system). A religious person, for example, may persuade herself that this is what God wanted, and find her inner balance in this way. The feelings resulting from separation or divorce may follow a similar pattern. When a couple separates by mutual agreement, the reasoning behind the decision might allow the ex-partners to 'get over' this unpleasant period relatively easily. However, the situation becomes more difficult in separations caused by one partner abandoning the other. The abandoned party may begin an internal conversation about her loved one, asking what she did wrong, why he left her, how she can get him back. In such cases, mediation may not be directly effective. For some time, which will vary according to the situation and person, the abandoned individual will feel unhappy about the situation and 'bad' about herself; but eventually she will find a way to lessen the pain, perhaps by finding another boyfriend or simply reaching a stage where she feels she can 'move on'. Mediation might help the individual to make sense of the situation, but may not necessarily help her to feel better about it for some time. Eventually, however, the individual should feel better and, in many cases, mediation works towards this outcome and brings a state of 're-equilibration'<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Where this does not happen, and the individual continues to be unhappy without improvement, there may be a more serious problem: the individual may suffer from depression, and thus the mediation function cannot operate effectively.



In such instances, the mediation process operates as the receiver of an unpleasant message that must be internalised as smoothly as possible, so that the individual does not get badly hurt. Mediation operates as a 'self-defence' system, trying to eliminate pain. Clearly, this does not always happen at once, and people do get hurt, suffer or become disappointed. At some point, however, most 'pull themselves together' and feel better through their internal reasoning. This internalisation is separate from mediation; it might be said that it tries to make an external conversation 'fit' into the internal environment of individual. The following diagrams represent this:

Unpleasant External Conversation / occasion / news / development



Mediation Process / internalisation



Internal Conversation / logical reasoning / painful acquiescence



Inner Balance, harmony, acceptance, satisfaction.

*OR*

Unpleasant External Conversation / occasion / news / development



Inefficient operation of Mediation Process



Painful Internal Conversation /powerless internal reasoning /



Inner Conflict, imbalance and dissatisfaction.

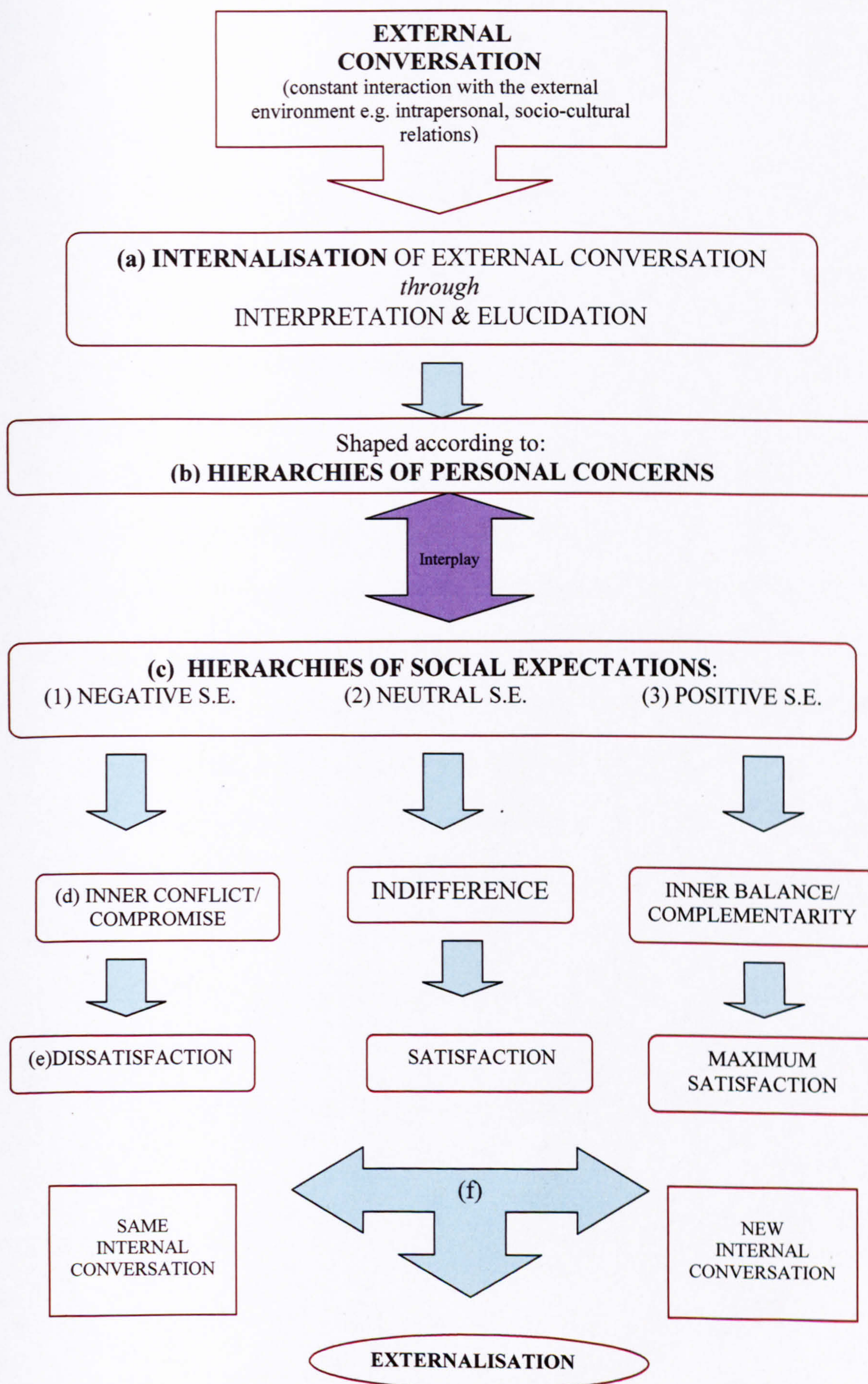
Generally, the mediation mechanism operates in favour of the individual in a 'self-defensive' way. This means that it helps the individual to feel better about herself

through internal reasoning, by ‘making sense’ of what is going on or by following ‘what feels right’. The individual tries to achieve the highest possible level of inner balance and possibly satisfaction. Clearly, this is not always the case. Many people suffer from depression visit psychotherapists, or take pills, because of nightmares, being over-stressed, and seeing no way out; some may become mentally ill, face pathological problems or even commit suicide. No-one would disagree that making our way through life is not an easy task. It involves endless difficulties, problems, questions, dilemmas, constant compromises and continuous internal conversations. Mediation is not a super-power which provides answers, gives strength, hope and fulfils people’s lives. Rather, mediation offers the means that people may use to make their way through life; the ability to process everyday problems, to deliberate upon their lives, their social environment and themselves. Mediation is a specific mechanism which consists of particular components and has certain targets. Regardless of the achievement of the desired inner balance, inner harmony, satisfaction or even happiness, mediation is the mechanism which tries to achieve that, although it does not always succeed.

#### 7.4: Mediation as a Synthesised Mechanism.

In Chapter 5 of this thesis, a diagram of mediation was presented and in the following chapters an analytical discussion followed concerning each part of this diagram. In this section I will re-present this diagram and explain its importance and operation as a whole. Thus, a synthesised picture of mediation will be ventured. In the diagram, the influence of many theorists is apparent and the inspiration of central concepts (e.g., internal conversation and reflective deliberation) can clearly be seen.







The diagram presents mediation as having certain stages or processes:

- The first stage is internalisation of the external conversation through interpretation and elucidation (a).
- This internalisation is shaped according to specific personal hierarchies of concerns (b), which are unique for each individual.
- At the same time, there is an interplay between stage (b) and the following stage, institutional social expectations (c).
- This process may take one of three forms: it may involve negative social expectations (1), positive social expectations (2), or a neutral form (3). In each instance, relevant stages follow:
  - In the case of negative social expectations, inner conflict and compromise (d-i) follows, which could lead to dissatisfaction (e-i).
  - In the case of the neutral form of social expectations, an indifferent phase follows (d-ii), which in turn may lead to a specific degree of satisfaction (e-ii).
  - With positive social expectations, inner balance and complementarity (d-iii) follow, resulting in the achievement of maximum satisfaction (e-iii).
- After the completion of these stages of mediation, no matter if they result in dissatisfaction, satisfaction or maximum satisfaction, one of three options will ensue (sixth stage):
  - the individual may continue reproducing the same internal conversation (f-i);  
*or*
  - she may start to produce a new internal conversation (f-ii);  
*or*
  - she may decide to externalise part of her current internal conversation (f-iii).



The suggested stages or processes (a-f) of mediation take the form of internal conversation, and the whole process of mediation is also understood as a series of reflexive deliberations. Thus, following Archer's theory of internal conversation and reflexive deliberations, I put forward a mechanism which relates internal and external conversation. Mediation internalises external conversation (external environment) and through specific processes, the individual filters her external environment by using internal conversation and her ability to be reflexive. Subsequently, she may or may not externalise part of this process. In either case, there is a specific process according to which the individual is able to connect with the external environment and her inner cosmos. This is the mediation process and it is unique for each individual. As discussed earlier, mediation operates differently within different external environments. Except for where negative external social expectations are completely binding for the individual, the mediation mechanism derives from her personal concerns and not from social expectations. In other words, priority is given to personal concerns and social expectations fitted in accordingly.

The following example synthesises all the stages/processes of mediation. A young woman (A) has been in a relationship with a young man (B) for several years. As she is satisfied with her relationship and she loves her partner, and he has the same feelings about her, they decide that they will get married and plan to do so within a year. However, as time goes by, A becomes suspicious that B may also have feelings for another woman (C), but she has no proof. A notices that every time he meets C he cannot take his eyes off her and they are becoming close friends. When she talks to him about the matter, B says that she is overreacting: it is A he loves and wants to marry. A produces endless internal conversations in order to find a balanced way to

combine an external situation that she does not like with her inner feelings and thoughts about this issue. One of her endless internal conversations could be as follows:

**Scenario (external conversation/environment):** A and B have just met C. A has again noticed her boyfriend's behaviour towards C.

A1: He was staring at her again; he was looking directly into her eyes. It is more than obvious that he likes her.

A2: The question is how much does he like her?

A3: I might find a man attractive and look at him, but I have never allowed myself to be so obvious! How can he do that?

A4: Can't he understand that others might misunderstand him? Can't he see how upset I get with his behaviour?

A5: They talk for ages as if I am not even there! They enjoy each other's company so much!

A6: The worst thing is that I can't react, I can't say anything! It will become obvious that I am jealous and that I am acting like an envious person! That would make me seem worthless.

A7: There is nothing I can prove, only suspicions that I have in my head. But how can I marry a man if I am not sure that I trust him? How can I do this?

A8: Now wait a minute! Every time you go out with his friends they are so excited talking about football and cars that he forgets that you are there!



A9: Every time he gets excited, he talks with passion and he neglects everyone else. Besides, if he does have feelings for her he could have postponed the wedding, or stopped saying that he loves me or tried to create a distance between us.

A10: He gives me no sign of what he really thinks! I wish I knew if I could trust him!

A11: Oh come on! You have been together for ages! You should know if he is lying or not! He has been there for you for so long, why would he want to destroy everything now?

A12: I could have convinced myself that everything is fine if I hadn't seen that look in his eyes...

A13: I have to be sensible. I can't destroy a relationship and a potential marriage because of one look! I hope that this is just a phase and that it will pass.

The above internal conversation could result in this external conversation:

A1: Honey, do you think that December is a good month for our wedding?

B1: Yes, sure, why not?

A2: What if we postpone it until next summer?

B2: That sounds fine too.

A3: Will you be honest with me, no matter what?

B3: Of course I will! What this has to do with anything?

A4: You know how insecure I can get. I will always be honest with you!

B4: I know, honey! So will I.

This example demonstrates how an individual internalises and filters an external conversation/situation. A has internalised an external situation and tried to make sense of it. She explains to herself that her boyfriend stares at C (external situation) because he likes her (interpretation of an external action). A reminds herself that she might also look at another man, but not in that way (further interpretation and elucidation of the external action). This internalisation becomes shaped by her main personal concern: her fear that B might have feelings for another woman. Subsequently, an interplay begins between the relevant social expectations and her personal concerns: have others noticed this behaviour? What will others think if she reacts? She will seem weak and hopeless. She questions whether her thoughts derive from her imagination (conflict between her personal concern and her external environment). Then she begins to think about B's social environment (his friends) and concludes that he acts in similar ways when he interacts with others (finds himself in a social environment which offers congenial positive social expectations). However, she reverts her feelings again and tries to find the balance between her feelings for B and the feelings of insecurity that this situations causes. A is in a state of inner conflict since her personal concern/conversation (that B is cheating on her) is in contradiction with her external environment/conversation (B saying that she is overreacting). Although A makes a compromise and she tries to believe B, she cannot achieve a significant degree of inner balance and thus she is dissatisfied. At this point, she decides to produce an external conversation; it is not directly relevant to the content of her internal conversation, but her personal concern can be seen obtruding through it.



This external conversation may not be the last with regard to her concerns and more internal conversations might follow. What this example shows is that the particular pre-occupations that A has are related to her personal constellation of concerns (not to be cheated and to be able to trust B, to be respected, to be honest, to be able to recognise the truth, not to accuse B without being certain) and are those that 'form' and 'shape' her mediation process. If her personal hierarchy of concerns had been different, she may not have a problem with her boyfriend staring at another woman. At the same time, the interplay that takes place between her personal concerns and external social expectations (i.e., she cannot prove anything, if she reacts she will reveal a negative part of herself) guides A to make compromises for the time being, not to achieve inner balance or satisfaction and possibly to continue having similar internal conversations. Her decision demonstrates that her mediation mechanism has operated in such a way that A makes a 'sensible' decision, tries to 'make sense' of the situation. Conversely, if A were even more worried and concerned about this given situation, she might have externalised her fears, or accused B of cheating on her and left him. A's reaction at this point, however, was to try to achieve some kind of balance between her internal and external conversation. Since this balance is based on compromise, it is fragile.

As previously discussed, one of an individual's main aims is to achieve a degree of inner balance. In this example, once this aim has been achieved (the individual has successfully combined her social and private priorities and through this synthesis achieved a comprehensive interpretation of herself and her micro-world), it is possible for her to progress, externalising part of this inner process, and thus producing external conversation. Through the completion of this circle, it is likely that the

individual will gain satisfaction from the outcome of her interplay between her inner and outer cosmos. If she thus feels satisfaction (because she has achieved a goal, made the right decision, or because her expectations were realised), she then has two options: either to produce further internal conversation (and therefore mediation) on this matter, or to begin a different internal conversation on a new matter (and thus begin a new circle of interplay).

However, as we have seen, inner balance is not always achieved, and instead inner disharmony may occur. In the case of an inner conflict, the social and the private hierarchies within a person contradict each other and this situation leads to dissatisfaction, since the individual cannot resolve the interplay between her inner conflict and the social world. It is therefore possible for the individual to continue her internal conversation and reactivate her mediation mechanism until she reaches the desired degree of inner balance or the desired satisfaction (or peace of mind). In this situation, the continuation of the circle is inevitable and, in some instances, the circle may never be completed (for example, when a child dies, it is extremely difficult for the parents to find inner balance and peace of mind).

As can be seen through the above diagram and the accompanying analysis, mediation is a mechanism which helps the individual to make sense of the world and of herself in everyday life and, at the same time, to find her inner balance and, sometimes, happiness. This process can be seen as an endless journey. It seems that most people (if not all)<sup>8</sup> have the need to interact with themselves and the external environment and therefore need the appropriate inner process to do so. This mechanism is what I

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<sup>8</sup> I exclude those who sufferer from pathological and clinical conditions.



call mediation; while it can be further developed and studied as a process, I merely seek that it be recognised (and evaluated) as a concept.

### 7.5: The Necessity for Mediation.

I have proposed mediation as the relationship between internal and external conversation, because internal and external conversations are strongly related, and the one cannot exist without the other. Internal conversation shapes external conversation. However, the uniqueness of each individual derives from her personal concerns and internal conversation as defined and deliberated upon her. These characteristics constitute the basis on which the interplay between internal and external conversation is shaped.

Mediation effectively protects internal and external conversation from each other's dominion. Mediation insulates the 'self' or the inner cosmos of the individual, and all its inner processes and properties, from unnecessary exposure to the outer, and sometimes inhospitable, social environment. Thus, concerns, thoughts, needs, feelings and intentions may remain unspoken and unknown to others. In this way, the individual protects herself from unnecessary judgements, criticisms or rejections. Some parts of each individual remain hidden and unexpressed; this is a decision each individual makes according to her own personal constructions of concerns. Conversely, mediation also serves to defend society from internal conversation, since each person's inner life potentially contains quantities of anti-social impulses and inclinations.

I suggest that mediation is neither a social construction nor an organ (like a heart or bladder) that operates for all individuals in the same way. Mediation is structured within every individual and operates according to that person's individuality, thus making it private and unique. On the other hand, mediation serves the same function in most people: to protect them from their social environment and *vice versa*, monitoring their interactions with one another on a daily basis. As long as those two aspirations can operate without contradiction, society can evolve and develop, and so can the individual.

According to Archer, another way to present mediation (of structural and cultural factors) is to consider it as the ability individuals have to produce reflexive deliberations. Mediation then could be seen as reflection which is built upon personal commitment and social normativity and as the process through which reflexivity is formed and then filtered in its overt expression. Reflexive deliberation is not an identical process for all individuals, but rather varies between them. Through reflexivity, the individual tries to make sense of the world and of herself, while at the same time defining her unique *modus vivendi* in the social order. The ultimate aim of each individual is to achieve some degree of inner balance, satisfaction and, perhaps, happiness. The means and levels that people use to achieve what they each define as balance and happiness can be very different for each individual. What remains common to everyone is the constant struggle to achieve a degree of satisfaction from life and the self and, in some cases happiness, or whatever it is that they value most.

### Criticism



The present study has attempted to offer an answer to a central social-theoretical question: what is the relationship between internal and external conversation? The answer was that this relationship is formed according to mediation *which is the deliberative process that enables the individual to achieve a satisfactory degree of inner balance between her inner and her external world*. Mediation consists of certain stages, but a central role is given to hierarchies of personal concerns in its orchestration. Although to date there have been few attempts to answer such a fundamental sociological question, I will now consider the kinds of criticism that the above proposition may elicit.

The first involves methodological issues. What I investigate (i.e., the relationship between internal and external conversation) is not an observable or measurable social phenomenon, since internal conversation cannot be observed or heard by the social researcher; thus any kind of theorisation concerning the above terms defies empiricism, though it remains open to empirical investigation. My response to such criticism is that, although it can clearly be seen that the mediation mechanism I propose has not been substantiated empirically in the present work; yet, but, in terms of Popper's 'searchlight' empirical examination post-dates the formulation of theory and the derivation of testable hypothesis from it. My work here has focused on an attempt to examine the relevant aspects of the social theory, and not to proceed to substantiate the proposed mediation mechanism its components or its workings. Archer (2003) has previously provided empirical evidence that upholds the function of reflexivity and internal conversation in establishing individual *modi vivendi* in the social order; given that mediation is based on internal conversation and is the process

through which reflexivity is exercised, it may be valid to suggest that analogous empirical research can offer support for this specific mechanism.

Another potential criticism concerns the nature of the central question posed here. The question ‘what is the relationship between internal and external conversation?’ could be characterised as an ‘existential’ problem, since it is not directly observable and measurable; but that would be to limit sociology to the confines of empiricism. As I have maintained, mediation is based on internal conversation and, as Archer might say, upon the ability the individual has to consider herself critically in relation to her social environment and *vice versa*. Like any neologism that offers something new and contentious, the terms ‘internal conversation’ and ‘reflexivity’ have received extensive critical attention. Both, however, are recognised terms in social theory and have been employed in a number of widely-accepted theoretical works. The term ‘mediation’ is new, although it is related to the above terms and examines aspects of the inner cosmos of the individual. However, internal conversation and mediation can be understood under their own descriptions and reported upon by each individual who experiences it (and thus become at least partially accessible to the researcher). In addition, there is a fundamental question within social theory that needs to be answered, namely, ‘where does action derive from?’ While we cannot directly observe the source of action, we cannot merely state that this source is a ‘metaphysical’ in kind. In this work, I provide specific responses to real and concrete problems by using hypothetical examples which could be replaced methodologically by real instances supplied by subjects.



### 7.6 Discussion.

*Mediation is the deliberative process that enables the individual to achieve a subjectively-defined degree of 'inner balance' between her inner and external world which is satisfactory to her.*

Mediation is the process that enables the individual to internalise external conversation, to externalise internal conversation, and to interpret the interaction between herself and the social environment, an interpretation shaped according to each individual's personal and social hierarchies of concern. Personal constellations of concerns represent the filter through which the individual perceives life; social priorities may be perceived in the same way. Mediation is a mechanism that tries to combine the two and reach a degree of inner balance between social and personal priorities, in order for an individual to act and to develop. Therefore, the composition of the filter can be regarded as a combination of personal and social priorities, although, in societies where social expectations are not in contradiction with personal concerns, the personal character of mediation has to agree with the social and not *vice versa*. This suggests that each individual's uniqueness derives from her personal characteristics and principles even though these are undoubtedly forged within a social context.

Mediation is not always the outcome of a harmonious co-existence and combination between the personal and social cosmos of the individual. Mediation can also be perceived as the outcome of a conflict between them. In many instances, the individual's social 'shoulds' do not agree with personal 'wants', and thus the

individual enters a long period of internal conversation and exploration in order to find the desired balance between these poles. There are instances where this balance is not achieved and a person may repeat the same types of internal conversations and reproduce the same arguments, sometimes becoming obsessed about the unfinished circle she attempts to complete. There is a constant interplay between the personal and social hierarchies within each individual. Priorities may change, may conflict, the individual may face unpleasant situations, but in every case mediation is the mechanism that helps the individual approach and, in some cases, achieve a balanced perspective. However, no-one lives her entire life in a constant state of harmony and inner stability. Nevertheless, she constantly seeks to achieve this state. Mediation is the personal way of making sense of the world and operating within it.

Mediation is a mechanism that provides the means for every individual to reach Ithaca. It is not Ithaca itself. We might achieve moments of happiness, but equally we might not. Everyone tries to solve problems, to make sense of the world in relation to herself and *vice versa*. Some people succeed in some aspects of life and fail in others. It is rare to find a person who is always completely happy. Mediation operates successfully in some instances, unsuccessfully in others; sometimes it may not even work at all. Regardless of the level of achievement, every individual has a specific way of interacting with herself and the social environment. This may vary between people or circumstances, but consists of some specific elements common to all<sup>9</sup>: social and private priorities, internalisation and externalisation, reflexive deliberations, negative and positive social expectations, conflict and balance, satisfaction and dissatisfaction; more might be added as research continues.

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<sup>9</sup> In pathological situations, the mediation mechanism is probably unable to function properly; such occurrences are beyond the scope of the present study.



I have proposed how mediation can be understood, and discussed why mediation is important, necessary and, to a certain extent, an inevitable inner process for each individual. Mediation is responsible for the individual's inner balance and through it the individual makes sense of the world and herself in relation to one another. Mediation protects the inner life of the individual and defines her existence. This area of research constitutes a challenge to the study of an individual's nature. It may be that mediation constitutes a way to penetrate the private part of each agent and, at the same time, to understand what makes society so complex.

## CONCLUSION

I have proposed mediation as a mechanism which is based on the concept of the deliberative interplay between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual and takes place through internal conversation. This mechanism consists of certain interrelated and interconnected stages. Each stage has been examined separately by using the appropriate terms and tools derived from theoretical analysis.

Mediation is the mechanism that the individual effectively 'places' between herself and society in order to internalise the external conversation and externalise the internal conversation. Each individual is in constant interaction with herself and her social environment and some of these interactions will be internalised. The internalisation of external conversation is not merely the recording and recalling or monitoring of the external conversation, rather a process of 'filtering' takes place in which the individual chooses which aspects of the external conversation she will process further. This choice takes place according to the mediation mechanism.

This phase of the mediation process can be summarised as follows. The internalisation of external conversation takes place through the interpretation and elucidation of external conversation. Thus, each person interprets what she hears, sees, and understands before deciding what to do with this information. The interpretation and elucidation involved in the internalisation of external conversation is shaped according to a central interplay upon which the problem of mediation is based. This is between: on the one hand, personal hierarchies of concerns and on the other hand institutionalised social expectations.



Personal hierarchies of concerns constitute the second stage of mediation, which was examined separately from the third stage (social expectations associated with different institutions). However, these two stages are in constant interplay because they are constantly interrelated. A personal hierarchy of concerns is the aspect of each individual that distinguishes her from any other person. These aspects have to do partly with the principles and values (e.g., being fair or honest) which each individual endorses, but more importantly, with the things that each person cares about, things she considers important or that she prioritises in her everyday life (e.g., a boyfriend, sports, or career).

The constellation of concerns according to which each individual forms her everyday life and takes her decisions are not solely or purely personal. Social hierarchies and social expectations are also involved, the former referring to a collective understanding of what is socially important (e.g., education, family, religion). Social expectations relate to what should be done at a social level (being a good parent, participating in charity functions, becoming educated), although specific understanding may vary between collectivities, according to gender, ethnicity, class, religion etc. Thus, the hierarchical system of each individual is the outcome of a constant interplay between the social and the personal character of that individual.

However, the central point about these two stages is this: that the personal element of the mediation process has to accord with the social aspect and not *vice versa*<sup>1</sup>.

Although there is an interplay between the social and the private aspects of mediation,

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<sup>1</sup> Discussed in detail in section 7.2.2 above. There, and in the present discussion, cases of wholly negative social expectations are excluded as beyond the scope of this study.

the social expectations associated with the institutions with which the individual is involved, are those that will adjust to the personal hierarchy of concerns. Therefore, although individuals interact with various social forms, institutions, expectations and structures, they have the capacity to become actively involved with some of them at various levels and for different reasons: an individual will follow certain social expectations and forms because she perceives them to be important, while other people might evaluate them in a different way and follow different social expectations and forms. All such differences can be seen in children's and young people's orientations towards schooling and its prolongation beyond compulsory age of attendance.

Personal hierarchies of concerns are related to social hierarchies and expectations in certain ways. Thus these two levels may interact in a state of 1) conflict/contradiction, 2) complementarity/agreement, or 3) indifference/neutrality. In the first case, where the social and the personal priorities are in conflict, a degree of compromise is needed from the individual in order to function within the social environment. The most extreme form of this would involve coercive external action upon the individual; in this case, in which society is completely dominant, the individual cannot even compromise beyond inwardly cherishing reservations and resentment. In the case of a complementarity between the social and the personal hierarchies, the relationship is harmonious and the individual's actions are embraced and endorsed by the social environment. Where there is a neutral relationship between them, there is indifference between the individual's action (e.g., the individual's main concern is to collect butterflies, be a mountaineer, etc.) and society's expectations. Where personal and social priorities are in contradiction, the individual is in a state of inner conflict which



leads to dissatisfaction. In the case of complementarity, the individual experiences a state of inner balance and thus maximum satisfaction is achievable, while in the case of indifference, satisfaction is what usually follows.

### The Answers offered by Mediation.

The primary answer offered by mediation relates to the dialogical way that the individual is connected with society. Each individual produces internal as well as external conversations through which she is able to interact with herself and the social environment. Internal conversations remain silent and private, but part of them may be externalised. The individual uses a specific process in order to decide which part of her internal conversation she will externalise. This process operates differently for each individual, but has a common aim: the main objective of mediation is to achieve a subjectively defined degree of balance between the inner and the outer cosmos of the individual, which is satisfactory to her. This means that the process of mediation helps the individual to filter what may be said and what will remain unspoken. In this way, the individual maintains some independence and privacy, but is also an active member of the social world.

Socio-personal relations are formed differently for each individual, but the rationale remains the same. The relationship between the individual and society is formed according to a specific kind of interplay between the personal and the social priorities of each person. A combination of social and personal characteristics thus constitutes a hierarchical system of values, principles, needs and expectations according to which the relationship that each individual forms with society is based at any given time.

This leads us to questions concerning the nature of this relationship/connection and where it derives from. The interaction between individual and society is not always one of peaceful co-existence. Instead the extent to which this relationship will be harmonious or conflicting depends on the way that social expectations and personal concerns relate to one another. Moreover, since the personal concerns of each individual may change, there is no stable, constant and specific way that social expectations and personal concerns are connected; similarly, social expectations do not necessarily remain stable. Thus the nature of the relationship between internal and external conversation cannot be static and unchangeable. Nevertheless, given the exercise of personal properties and powers in internal conversation, the individual is able to achieve a certain degree of independence and autonomy without being considered as the 'monad' of 'individualism'. Each person is a social agent, an active member of the social environment, but at the same time capable of exercising her irreducible private and personal powers to some, variable degree.

I offer a very specific answer to the question of where the nature of this relationship derives from. I suggest that the vital and central idiomorphic aspect of mediation is this: the *personal character of the mediation process has to accord with the social and not vice versa*. As discussed in section 7.2.2, in social environments which are not in complete contradiction with personal concerns, each individual makes her way through life and makes sense of the world, through an interplay between the social expectations and her personal and private principles, concerns and beliefs at any given time. In other words, the individual chooses through mediation (and thus deliberative reflection and internal conversation) which social expectations, forms, structures and



norms she will follow, believe in, reproduce, reform, improve or deny. The individual is not a passive observer to whom 'things happen'.

In fact, each person follows, respects, reproduces and believes in social expectations, forms, institutions, etc. that can be combined (to an acceptable extent) with her personal concerns. Different people may evaluate the same social expectation in disparate ways and make completely dissimilar choices. Each individual evaluates her social environment differently because her personal concerns, values and principles are different. In many instances, the individual has to make greater or lesser compromises in order to adjust her personal concerns to the exact social environment in which she finds herself at any given time. Furthermore, the combination or relationship (harmonious or conflicting) between her personal concerns and the social expectations she encounters may change and therefore the nature of mediation may also change. It is important to note that it is the personal, and not the social, aspects of mediation that make the difference, since, unless subjected to coercion, the individual chooses which external expectations to respond to and in what way. In short, the nature of mediation is based on the interplay between the personal concerns and the social expectations that each individual subjectively tries to balance.

Adjustments and compromises may differ dramatically between individuals because different individuals evaluate social expectations and circumstances disparately and try to achieve a satisfactory degree of inner balance between their personal concerns and social expectations in their own unique way. A student's main concern may be to receive the best possible education; thus she will try to gain a place at the best university she can, irrespective of whether her social environment (family, teachers,

friends) assures her that the state college is her best option. This student will make her choices by giving priority to her personal concerns; she will then try to combine the social expectations with her personal concerns (or make compromises if necessary) in order to find her inner balance. The main priority of another person may be to stay with her parents and study at the same time. For this individual the encouragement of her social environment (social expectations) to study at the state college will have a reinforcing influence, unlike the student in the first case.

The above suggestion constitutes the answer to a number of additional questions, such as: what is the factor responsible for differentiating between the actions of the individuals? Why do all individuals not respond in the same way in similar social circumstances? Why do people follow different norms or forms or structures? The answer that I offer is that the individual's precise constellation of concerns are what make each human being unique and different. The influence of social structures, forms and institutions is undeniable, but, equally, every individual reacts to each social influence, effect or direction in a different way and for different reasons. A typical example would be that of education: through the social process of education, individuals are directed, influenced, shaped and skilled in similar ways by similar people for comparable purposes. Each individual, however, reacts to this social process in a different way, and the final decision about each individual's profession is usually made in accordance with the personal concerns of the individual. This will be the case even if there is a degree of compromise involved, as for example when a young woman decides to become nurse rather than doctor because of her and her family's positioning on the distribution of scarce resources.



This study has also addressed more practical and technical questions, such as: in what form does mediation occur? Mediation is here understood as a form of interplay which uses internal conversation in a dialogic way, with all the elements of which internal conversation consists (i.e., one or more verbal language(s), grammar, syntax, symbols, numbers, icons, memories, emotions, sensations, representations etc.). All these elements can co-exist, and can be combined within the same or different internal conversations. Thus, mediation operates in the form of internal conversation, as defined by Archer and Wiley.

Although it is a new concept, and the present work constitutes the first attempt to address and explain it, mediation cannot be seen as analogous Weber's usage of the 'ideal type'. Mediation is neither an abstract concept nor a system devised by the investigator to be of methodological utility in explaining some aspects of social reality. It is a real mechanism, a process that each individual experiences *qua* individual and is able to recognise if she wishes. Mediation is a mechanism shaped by the individual and it operates according to the interplay of personal and social hierarchies pertaining to the individual. It has separate and definable components which can also be understood as filters that all individuals use in their everyday lives in order to make sense of the social world and themselves.

Mediation operates according to the specific stages that I have explained in earlier chapters; at the same time it can be understood as a part of circle which connects internal and external conversation. This circle is ongoing and endless. New internal and external conversations are constantly initiated, and mediation internalises and processes each one of them; balance and satisfaction may or may not be achieved.

Mediation may process and reproduce similar internal and external conversations continuously, process new conversations, combine new and old, reach a conclusion, change a decision etc. Mediation operates for as long as internal conversations operate, unlike external conversations which cease for extensive periods of time.

This might suggest a reasonable question: are people aware of mediation and can they control it? This elicits the same reply as a similar question concerning internal conversation. People are aware of their internal conversations if they pay attention to them. Empirical evidence, provided by Wiley and Archer *inter alia*, upholds the fact that when individuals are asked about their internal conversations they are able to detect this 'phenomenon' and describe it. Similar empirical support for mediation is not currently available; nevertheless, since mediation operates through the form of internal conversation, it would be fair to say that people are not directly aware of this mechanism, but that they may detect it and reflect upon it if they wish to do so. With regard to the question of control, again available empirical evidence cannot provide definite answers. However, since individuals choose what to care and worry about, what to critically deliberate upon, what to reject and what to agree with, it would be fair to say that people can control mediation insofar as they can control its stages; they can skip one stage and overemphasise another. Each person can literally change the subject, and thus the process, of mediation. Individuals, therefore, can control mediation to the degree that they can control the separate filters of this mechanism.

The most important question is whether mediation is social or agential constitution. While the core of mediation depends on the interplay between institutionalised social expectations and the personal hierarchies of concerns, the balance that is attempted is



a subjective undertaking for each individual and does not derive exclusively from society. This means that mediation is indeed an agential property and power which is both in constant contact and connection with the social environment and influenced by it. The degree and the extent of this influence is a personal and private matter for each individual. It must be noted, however, that the external environment, and thus the interactions between individuals, constantly affect the individual's understanding of herself and the social environment. This is upheld by the majority of social theorists who have studied 'the individual' (e.g. American Pragmatists, social psychologists, scholars of sociolinguistics) or society (e.g., Marx, Weber, Durkheim) or both (e.g., Simmel, Goffman, Bourdieu, Giddens). Yet the reason each individual has a different understanding of herself and the social world remains unknown. As Archer has suggested, it is internal conversation that makes the difference in how disparate agents respond differently to the social structures they confront. I would add that, by using internal conversation, mediation combines the personal and social priorities of each individual in a harmonious or conflicting way, in order to achieve a subjective degree of inner balance.

### Limitations

There are two specific aspects relating to mediation that I have been unable to determine. The first is, given the irreducible agential powers of the individual, from where do constellations of personal concerns and hierarchies derive? It might be said that this constitutes one of the core problems of the social sciences (*inter alia*). My intentions in the present work were not to decipher human existence and nature, but rather explain how internal conversation is related to external conversation. The

uniqueness of human existence is an unsolved mystery which, since Plato and Aristotle, has been related to many different aspects of social reality. The elements involved in this question may be extensive (e.g., a family's genes; an individual's genes, neurons, predispositions, state of health and mind; biological, neurological, psychological, behavioural and developmental aspects, etc.) and they certainly include social aspects (e.g., family, school, peers, religion, political environment, degree of external freedom, etc.). The list is endless and there is still no specific answer to this question. What is important, however, is the realisation that human agents are not solely and exclusively social constructions, but are able to maintain a degree of personal autonomy and independence. The importance of social influence cannot be questioned. However, the importance of the personal properties of the individual should also not be underestimated.

A conclusive response to the question of where personal concerns derive from is not to be found in this study, or in any other social-scientific analysis. What can be found is an additional reason to continue to reflect upon it: that is, the ability of the individual to interact with herself and the social environment in a complex and constant way that *she* defines.

The second question is: how can the conclusions of this study be generalised? This raises a more practical issue. Admittedly, empirical evidence is essential in order for mediation to become a fully substantiated mechanism which is credited with performing generalised functions. At the same time, it must be recognised that this specific area of sociological research has been neglected until recently. It is vital to construct a theory of the relationship between internal and external conversation



before proceeding to empirical investigation. In this work, I have taken the first step, and attempted to suggest a place for this relationship on the social-theoretical map. Next, however, further research must be undertaken to evaluate my theory and supply an empirical examination of its applications.

### Contributions.

This study offers a definition, description, analytical theorisation and critical discussion of the relationship between internal and external conversation. In it, I have proposed a specific term, 'mediation mechanism', to explain the way in which the individual interacts with herself and society. The concept of mediation constitutes a continuation of Archer's theory on internal conversation and reflexive deliberation. The examination of mediation has been based on the notion of internal conversation and reflexivity in order to connect the individual's inner concerns with social expectations. Future studies might build on this initial attempt, in order to detail more comprehensively the ways in which internal conversation becomes external and *vice versa*, and to evaluate the conclusions offered here through adducing empirical evidence.

Unlike the conceptualisations found in relevant social theories, the mediation mechanism *is the filter the individual places between herself and society and not the filter that society places between itself and the individual*. This is the main and underlying difference between my concept of mediation and its analogues, such as Mead's 'generalised other', Bourdieu's 'habitus' or even the Goffmanian 'go-between'. I have addressed the conceptualisation of socialisation, in Simmelian terms

of interaction, not only through social forms, structures and inter-actions, but through agential properties and powers.

The present work constitutes a (paradoxical, as some might think it) sociological tribute to the agential powers and properties of the individual and upholds the ability of the individual to make sense of the world and herself by giving priority to her own powers rather than being fully dependant on and guided by external factors and forces.

I conclude by paraphrasing a remark made by Simmel, which combines the importance of irreducible agential powers and the undeniability of social influence:

*Man is like a pendulum that swings between his 'wants' and society's 'shoulds'*<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Simmel's original statement is: 'man is like a pendulum that swings between egoism and altruism'.



Ithaca gave you the marvellous journey.  
Without her you wouldn't have set out.  
She has nothing left to give you now.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaca won't have fooled you.  
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,  
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

K. Kavafis, 'Ithaca' (my trans.)

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